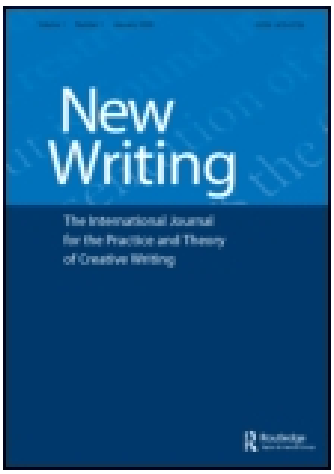

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The Poet in the Art Gallery: Accounting for Ekphrasis

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The Poet in the Art Gallery: Accounting for Ekphrasis

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This paper reports on the experience of composing a book of poems about visual art and on the ways in which this was affected by the institutional circumstances pertaining to its funding. Underpinning the AHRC's support for creative writing is the notion that creative writing should be conceived as a form of practice-led research. The case for support therefore stressed the ways in which the modes of writing about art would also form a subject for creative practice and critical reflection and the author offered both a critical preface and a critical article in this context. A project which involves ekphrasis, however, brings the relationship between the creative and critical components of the creative act into the sharpest possible focus and the author found himself engaged on a project which had the Academy's understanding of creative writing at its heart. This paper examines how the reading of an unusual critical text – itself a hybrid of critical prose and poetry – impacted the intellectual tensions at play among the poems being created, leading to paradoxical outcomes: the incorporation of critical prose into lyrically inflected prose-poems and a rejection of critical prose as a vehicle adequate to the documentation of practice-led creative processes.

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My title suggests a further contribution to the critical literature on ekphrasis and for the purposes of this paper I adopt the definition of that term given by James Heffernan 'the verbal representation of visual representation' (1993: 3). Indeed one of my aims will be to report on the experience of composing a book length sequence of poems about visual art. Over the years, painting in particular has come to play a vital and sustaining role in my life. My mother is a painter and I have always envied what I perceive to be the more immediate access to the real offered by her art. This is a commonplace feeling among writers. The American poet J.D. McClatchy (1988: xiii) reminds us that 'for most [twentieth century] poets paintings are primal, as ''real'' as the bread and wine on the table, as urgent as a dying parent or concealed lover in the next room'. Such sentiments are expressed with similar eloquence by representatives of the French poetic traditions. René Char (1979: 169) for example, evokes the ability of visual art to accede to 'the real's primal identity before words take over'. My project, therefore, had its roots both in a strong personal desire to engage creatively with visual art and in an awareness of literary tradition. In addition, however, the process of composition was deeply affected by the

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institutional circumstances pertaining to its conception and funding. I am one of a relatively new breed of British academics: a creative writer employed by the Academy to teach both craft and theory and whose own creative output is regularly peer assessed. At a time of financial stringency, much emphasis is laid on applying to funding councils for research grants and one's success in raising money in this way is also subject to measurement. The story that follows, therefore, is one that demonstrates how the Academy's understanding of creative writing and the procedures it has adopted in order to support it meshed with and informed the more urgent and personal promptings of the creative impulse.

Underpinning the Arts and Humanities Research Council's support for creative writing is the notion that creative writing should be conceived as a form of practice-led research. The AHRC will not fund creative writing 'output' alone. Documentation of the research process in the form of some type of analysis must be explicitly provided and so my case for support stressed the ways in which the various modes of writing about art adopted in the course of the collection's composition would in themselves form a subject for creative practice and critical reflection. What I began to realise as I dutifully completed the various 'boxes' in the application process was that ekphrasis itself brings the relationship between the creative and critical components of the creative act into the sharpest possible focus. A poem about a painting is already a critical act, more so than a poem about anything in the 'real' world because it is responding to a pre-existing response. Indeed ekphrasis is a form of writing in which multiple participants in the process of literary exchange are often more explicitly present and designated than elsewhere, a deictic mode of address being one of its most common rhetorical features. I found myself engaged, therefore, on a project which – potentially – had the Academy's philosophical understanding of creative writing at its very heart. This did not make my task any easier! Indeed, it made the critical dimension of my project an issue from the very outset. I recognised that the critical, distanced nature of the ekphrastic act should certainly become an explicit subject within the collection itself but I was not at all certain, initially, about the kind or kinds of voice such discourse should adopt or indeed where it should be located: a critical preface – which I offered in the context of my original application for funding – increasingly seemed to me to be a crude solution to this problem and potentially a form of presentation that would not do justice to the complexity of ekphrasis itself.

Another consideration was the type of art I would write about. Here, again, personal inclination fitted well with institutional needs. The collection has its origins in a residency spent at an arts centre in Grez-sur-Loing, France. I lived for several months in a building converted from the old inn where Robert Louis Stevenson met his wife Fanny Osbourne and many of the foreign artists active in the Fontainebleau area in the 1870s. My residency grew out of a long-standing research interest in Franco-Scottish relations which has led me to publish academic books and articles in this field. It was natural therefore, to offer a topic in an area in which I had 'a track record' as an academic and personal ties as a writer. I have, therefore, written poems about Scottish artists who were influenced in some ways by French ones, by French paintings or French culture in a more general sense. Below, I have provided an extract from

a single poem from my collection due to be published by Carcanet Press in April 2011 in order to provide some kind of creative context for the remarks that follow and because it illustrates some of the more general points I wish to make.

One of the first issues I had to confront was where to begin. Elizabeth Loizeaux (2008: 22) points out the role of the birth of the museum in the 'story of the modern poetic sequence and of the modern poetic volume'. Many collections 'arrange series of ekphrases [. . .] in a museum display', Loizeaux writes, also stressing how narrative is a common feature of the ekphrastic impulse and a product of a museum going culture. My collection did not propose to engage with any specific gallery or museum but rather to create through verbal re-presentation an imaginary gathering of paintings that are physically scattered among many actual real-life institutions. In addition, my application for funding involved me in the composition of a project summary written in such a way that it should be accessible to the general public. This knowledge and experience suggested that I should attempt to narrate, via poetry, a story about the developing relationship between Scottish and French art and artists. Narrative was uppermost in my mind not just because ekphrasis is about delivering 'the story out of the single moment so often depicted in western painting or sculpture' (Loizeaux, 2008: 22) but because it was present at a pragmatic level, embedded in the institutional structures that enabled my collection to come into being.

This meant that I needed to think about chronology. Wasn't there something dully predictable about a series of ekphrases beginning in the late middle ages and plodding up through the centuries to the present day? Francis Bacon's warning came back to mind: 'and the moment the story is elaborated, the boredom sets in; the story talks louder than the paint' (Bal, 1999: 26)[1]. What I hoped, simply, as I began to write, was that the frequent need to bring several paintings and/or painters within the compass of individual lyric poems would inevitably complicate and enrich the linear narrative on which I was about to embark. I also had some confidence from previous experience of writing extended poetic sequences that individual poems often play truant in surprisingly creative ways from their 'position' in a narrative line and are able to communicate with or echo poems placed elsewhere within the overall structure.

I began, therefore, at the beginning or what I decided should be the beginning, namely with that conflicted artist, Mary, Queen of Scots. Daughter of a French mother and Scottish father, Mary is not remembered first and foremost for her poetry, written under the tuition of Pierre de Ronsard, or for her work with tapestry yet examples of both have come down to us. In a sense, she is an exemplary if unusual figure with which to begin a collection of ekphrastic verse: as a poet and artist, as a Franco-Scot, she embodies both thematic and rhetorical facets of the collection. Five poems emerged from this fruitful conjunction forming a mini-sequence within the whole and initiating what would become a subsidiary but emotionally and structurally sustaining reflection on the relation of fragment to whole. Even at the very beginning, therefore, the outlines of a metapoetic concern with the nature of the poetry collection itself was visible.

Overlapping with Mary, Queen of Scots but dying later in 1624 is the fascinating, little known figure of the Scottish calligrapher, Esther Inglis. Of Huguenot decent, Inglis created more than fifty-five hand stitched, embroidered booklets containing excerpts from the Psalms and other devotional texts which she sent to rich aristocratic patrons in the hope of receiving payment. Many of them also contain self-portraits by Inglis who is credited by Duncan MacMillan (1990: 65) as being the first Scottish artist to make a self-portrait. I looked at many of these illustrations and the poem that follows is the final section of a more extended piece I wrote in response to her self depiction:

RESISTING HELL
(i.m. Esther Inglis, calligrapher, 1571–1624)

III

I dreamt that I was at my escritoire again:
dawn over Leith and Leith nestling in the curling
terminals I give the letter C of Christ our Lord.
And then I dreamt the tiny town spoke from the hand
they call 'civilité', cried out to Esther crouched
with her crow quill over bees and whirlpool motifs.
I dreamt that little people clinging to the roofs
or snug in the crow's nest of a cresting ship
spied how my lines of lettera mancina
undulate eternally from page to page.
I saw the people balance dizzily
and drown in a kaleidoscope of shapes.
I dreamt they screamed that they were trapped
in language and lonely, wrecked in a partial view:
a few red tiles, a single sail and then I felt
my forty different hands weigh down
my body like nights of wilderness.
I dreamt this flattened costal town
was all that I could get of life,
just several strokes of chancery
beneath grotesques and river goddesses.
And that my art was copied from the books of men.

This poem raises another issue that will be familiar to students of ekphrasis. Inglis' career is constituted by a determined effort to 'speak out' which is a literal translation of the Greek origins of the term and it may be argued that her struggle to live by her art and reach beyond her class origins was compounded by the difficulty she faced as a woman attempting to write in a male, patriarchal culture in which poetic voice was habitually conceived as masculine and visual representations marked as feminine. The beautiful, tiny booklets she created are a crucible of competing tensions: she eschews any pretension to authorship by reproducing excerpts of the Psalms but the beauty

of the calligraphic scripts and other decorative motifs works against the modesty of the writing pushing it towards iconicity. This impulse is, surely, compounded by the decision to paint an image of herself seated at her writing table before the instruments of her art. My poem as a whole attempts to articulate and dramatise these tensions. I worried, particularly, about voice. Who would speak in this poem? In the end a tri-partite structure emerged that contains the voice of a male third person narrator as well as the ventriloquised monologue given by Inglis herself reproduced above. Is this an act of 'feminist ekphrasis' (Loizeaux, 2008: 81–82) or is the male gaze not again evident, intruding, manipulating Inglis into an overly passive position?

Sticking with my chronological trajectory I then faced a considerable problem as I could find no significant example of seventeenth century, French influenced Scottish art. Thanks again to Duncan MacMillan, however, I picked up on references to the third Marquis of Lothian who was a significant figure in the Scots covenanting army of the 1640s and who also seemed to have had an interest in collecting paintings. Research among the National Archives of Scotland revealed an extensive correspondence between Lothian and his father, the Earl of Ancram, who fought on the King's side during the Civil War. Over a period of some weeks, Lothian developed as a 'character' in my mind and eventually another dramatic monologue was created. At the heart of this piece lies the troubled relationship with his father and the expression of an identity in some disarray. What I detected here, however -and this initially worried me – was a return of concerns familiar to me from my previous collections. One of the more personal motives for writing about art was the idea that it would enable me to write a poetry that was less solipsistic in nature. The Lothian poem, however, could also easily be read as an example of gay ekphrasis, another kind of 'speaking out' and while this might well make critical sense to those interested in mapping the history of ekphrastic desire it did little to feed what Loizeaux (2008: 88) refers to as 'strategies for mitigating the egocentric and acquisitive' in her pages on Marianne Moore's ekphrastic verse. From this point on, in poem after poem, issues of gender and sexuality re-emerged until I felt compelled to make this pattern itself an explicit subject in the final poem of the sequence in a piece that offers a somewhat tongue-in-cheek 'Self Portrait of the Author as a Barbie Doll'. This process of creative research and reflection led me to the conclusion that the idea – widespread in critical texts and creative writing classrooms – that writing about art enables a turning away from the self and access, however mediated, to the world beyond needs to be nuanced. Furthermore, it drew my attention to the slight contradiction that exists between this position and the notion – equally frequently expressed – that poems about art are inevitably metapoetic in nature. If a poem about art ends up reflecting on its own processes then it is hardly surprising if the character of the author's deepest desire resurfaces as well.

There is not space here to give a blow by blow account of the artistic decisions made with regard to each of the poems in the collection. Nor would this be desirable, particularly since many of the statements made about them can only be tested against the poems themselves and this would involve the reproduction of a substantial part of the book itself. What I have done so far is

simply to outline a general approach, raise some of the practical and theoretical issues provoked by the poems, above all, perhaps, to identify what I experienced as a growing sense of unease as the collection developed. The rest of this paper is an attempt to define this sometimes elusive sense of disquiet and the role played by criticism in it.

On one level, this unease is a familiar component of ekphrastic tradition. Loizeaux gives a good account of this in her study, her most effective testimony being drawn from comments made by Seamus Heaney about his collaboration with the photographer, Rachel Giese when working on *Sweeney's Flight.* Loizeaux (5) notes that Heaney feared a 'misalliance of some sort between the impersonal instantaneous thereness of the picture ... and the personal, time-stretching pleas of the verse'[2]. One of the things I began to notice as my own collection developed was that few of the poems engage directly with individual canvases; several refer to a range of paintings by individual artists while others are what Heffernan (1993: 7) calls 'notional ekphrases', that is descriptions of imaginary paintings. In general there is a tendency to skirt around actual paintings, an interest in the lives of artists or in the cultural milieu. Could this be interpreted as a belated, even old fashioned subscription to Lessing's thesis outlined in his *Laokoon*: *An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766): poetry is a time-bound art; painting inscribes space? Very few of my poems gesture to the strong Modernist tradition of ekphrasis represented by writers such as Mallarmé, Apollinaire or Pound who had, via juxtaposition and simultaneity, discovered means of representing and suggesting spatial qualities in language.

I have already used the word 'tension' to describe the competing claims of verbal and visual representation in my poem about Esther Inglis but it would not be an exaggeration to say that each of the poems in the collection registers and even thematises a hybrid sense of admiration and unease. Such hybridity of sentiment perhaps inevitably led me to reflect more and more consciously about lyric form itself and its relation to the overall shape of the collection. It should, then, be no surprise that I began to move into the genre of the prose-poem, that quintessentially hybrid form. It is important, here, however, to try to recapture as exactly as possible the sequence of experiences and decisions that led me in this direction because I am aware now that the character of the collection changed quite considerably with this move into prose.

It would be easy to say that the form of the prose-poem began to manifest itself more frequently in the collection as I reached the twentieth century and started writing poems about sculpture, installations and video art. As a genre, the prose-poem is born out of Baudelaire's attempts to grapple with the modernities of urban living. But it was not knowledge of literary or art historical tradition that generated my prose poetry and a very specific form of it at that. Rather it was the chance reading of an unusual critical text – itself a hybrid of prose and poetry – that dramatically echoed and impacted the emotional and intellectual tensions at play among my own poems, leading me to paradoxical outcomes: the incorporation of critical prose into the context of lyrically inflected prose-poems and a rejection of traditional critical prose as a vehicle adequate to the documentation of practice-led creative processes.

T.J. Clark's *The Sight of Death: An experiment in Art Writing* (2006) is a study of the painter, Nicolas Poussin. It is, indeed, an unusual essay composed in the form of a personal journal and records Clark's changing reactions over a period of a year or more to just two canvases by the seventeenth century French master. Written against the grain of traditional art historical discourse, it does not seek substantially to contextualise Poussin's work but prefers, rather, to devote time and space to a painstaking comparison of the material effects of these pictures and record 'a kind of visuality that truly establishes itself *at the edge of the verbal*' (176). Clark's objection to the language of criticism is not that of some kind of anti-intellectual fixated on the intricacies and minutiae of craft. It stems from a belief that much that has been written about Poussin must be faulted because critics have not looked hard enough and – crucially – long enough at his paintings. Writing about Poussin's picture of Diogenes Clark insists (118) that the painting's meaning 'is about the moment preceding connectedness – preceding discourse – at which the relations between things are still in the process 'of being made up'. In this respect, he argues that 'distance and placement are the carriers of Poussin's thought' and he does not think that 'the analytical mode' is a good way of getting at this. 'The response to this sort of question', he adds (120), had better be descriptive, reiterative'.

This is a text written, bravely, against the digital, a world in which – as Hanjo Berressem (1999: 34) writes – 'texts, images and sounds can be mapped *onto* and inserted *into* each other'. Yet Clark's gesture is not, he claims, a nostalgic reaction but a way of getting at what it is in Poussin's art that lies beyond language, that is not paraphrasable. 'I seem almost to be setting myself the task of recapitulating in words every move in Poussin's process of manufacture, as opposed to describing the main lines of his end product', Clark writes (42–43). 'I know there is something excessive and maybe ludicrous, to entering this closely into someone else's imagined world. But these diary entries are partly meant as an argument in favor of such entry.' It is worthwhile returning to the word 'craft' here: for what Clark is trying to do via his reiterative descriptions is achieve a verbal equivalent of Poussin's art practice or craft. Significantly, he turns to the domain of poetry in his attempt to articulate this. Writing of Poussin's frequent depiction of tiny human figures within his landscape paintings, he suggests that although they were undoubtedly 'plotted' by the artist, they were so 'in the sense that a poet plots prosody or diction or the particular force of a rhyme. Scale and color, and opacity versus transparency, are the forms of an argument in Poussin: they *are* the argument.' (48) A little later he compares this to Jean-Luc Goddard's remark about a particular type of camera movement: 'Tracking shots are a question of ethics'. 'Yes', agrees Clark (50), 'but a *better* ethics – an ethics that will strike a different, more humane balance between the material and the ideal than a train of purely verbal thought, always moving at a tangent to its mere object can manage.' Poetry too is largely a 'train of verbal thought' but not 'purely'. The dimension of prosody, of line and stanza break offers a plastic equivalent to the practices and effects Clark recognises in Poussin's work so it should not surprise us that Clark begins to write poems in his attempts to get closer to the French master.

It is difficult to imagine a better description of what 'practice-led research' as opposed to research that is theoretically or scholarly inclined might sound like and I shall return to this issue later. For the moment, however, I should like to focus on the aspects of this argument that impacted forcefully on my own developing collection and enabled me to address some of the elements of unease identified above. In particular, Clark's book helped me towards a more sophisticated understanding of the mimetic impulse in ekphrasis. Clark worries, initially, about the 'excessive' nature of his procedure but as Stephen Bann's work on appreciations of mimesis in antiquity has shown it is likely that a sense of hyperbole is of its very essence. Bann (1989: 29) suggests that Georges Didi-Huberman:

> is right to question the function of this hyperbole. Is it to create, in language, a kind of ''referent by excess'' – in other words, to designate linguistically a pictorial effect of insurpassable mimetic realism? Or is it to indicate, by that very excess, a kind of ''defect in language'': to register as a symptom the fact that language can never come to terms with the ''splashing'' effect of pigments – can never do anything more than ''take notice'' of the indescribable reality of a surface stained with colours?[3]

This, surely, is very close to the conclusions Clark draws in his accounts of Poussin. But Clark's 'excessive' reiterations of Poussin's canvases also remind one of the recuperative work done by Antoine Berman on German Romantic theories of translation. If ekphrasis is sometimes thought of as being at two removes from the real world, so translation has very often been seen as an activity of 'secondary' significance. Berman (1984: 171) shows us that this was not so for theorists such as Novalis and F. Schlegel for whom translation was often a 'potentialisation' of the 'original' text. If Roman Jacobson (1981: 189–198) is correct and we may think of ekphrasis as a form of 'intersemiotic translation' then it too may offer a sensuous 'expansion'[4] not on offer via critical discourse or at least offered in ways that live closer to the material realities of the visual image.

Initially, then, the effects of reading Clark's book some way into the process of composing my collection of poems were twofold. On the one hand, it made me feel less guilty about 'translating' pictures into language and it made me suspicious of the ability of a certain kind of critical prose – of a type I knew I was contractually obliged to offer – to come to terms with my creative practice. This reaction was complicated, however, by the other aspect of Clark's study: the 'turn' to poetry at various stages in his argument.

Clark offers little explicit comment on his move into lyric poetry and how these approaches to Poussin might differ from his descriptive prose. Could these poems offer the verbal equivalent of what Wendy Steiner (1988: 13–14) calls 'the pregnant moment' in art 'in which a poem aspires to the atemporal ''eternity'' of the stopped-action painting'? Yet what strikes one first is that very few of Clark's poems are directly about the Poussin paintings in question. Some are dramatic monologues, one is a meditation on the role his art might have played in the life of his patron, Pointel. Mostly, these poems – like my own – look away from the paintings and into the stories and lives of the people associated with them. More useful – and perhaps more true – than

Steiner's definition of ekphrasis, is that offered by James Heffernan (1993: 5) who argues that it is 'dynamic and obstetric; it typically delivers from the pregnant moment of visual art its embryonically narrative impulse and thus makes explicit the story that visual art tells only by implication.' For Heffernan (6), ekphrastic 'description' is never 'pure' or 'a break on narrative progression' and in this respect he echoes Bann's understanding of ancient verbal mimesis as a literally 'excessive' gesture. Perhaps Clark's poems could be viewed as those moments in his approach to Poussin when he tries to get too close, moments that constitute what Mary Ann Caws (1989: 9) would call 'a bulge in the text', a moment 'of arrest, of holding, of catching up in their own obsessional passion'. Significantly, Clark's diary does not simply become a collection of poems. He returns to narrative prose but he is not as clear as he might be about why he chooses to do so. He is adamant (53), for example, that he means to make poems. They are not to be considered simply as a 'tactic', 'as steps towards a more flexible prose'. 'I do think a good poem about Poussin would be the highest form of criticism' he writes, but this sits uneasily with his attacks elsewhere in his study on traditional modes of art historical enquiry and he does not say enough about the special type of 'criticism' offered by ekphrastic verse. In my view, Clark's poems are indeed strategic moves towards the creation of a prose that he fantasises – in terms quite reminiscent of Baudelaire writing about the prose-poem – as being 'light as a feather, fast as free association, exact and heavy as a fingerprint'. (52) He turns back constantly from poetry to prose perhaps because he realizes that the 'arrest', the moment of 'holding' offered by a lyric poem is not 'excessive' enough, is just one stage in the inexhaustible process of accounting for visual art.

Clark's ekphrasis, therefore, allowed me to recognise and articulate to myself the salient features of the type of poems I was writing. But both his turn to poetry and *return* to prose offered a vision of different kinds of text and a more complex overall structure. Clark's originality is to have created a text that is neither a collection of poems nor an art history. It is not criticism or prose poetry. It is a mixture of all these elements and I began to imagine that the most effective way of writing about art might be a kind of middle way in which criticism and poetry co-exist in the form of a 'poessay' or 'essoem'. And this is, indeed, the form a number of the texts take in the latter part of the collection. These are texts that mix critical discourse and lyrical reflection dealing with contemporary artists such as the late Iain Hamilton Finlay, Alison Watt and Douglas Gordon. They approach their subjects via a flexible poetic prose that refuses the competing framing devices of lyric prosody and signals the inability of criticism to permit a sensuous submission to the art work's idiom.

An ekphrastic poem is, from the very outset, an act of re-reading and re-representing. It is the prime example, perhaps, of 'creative writing' that is also a 'critical' act. For that very reason, it made 'criticism', criticism's varied modes and voices an issue for the collection. But I hope I have managed to suggest, primarily through my engagement with Clark's text, how inappropriate it would have been for me to begin the collection with a critical preface that sought to do some of the things, using some of the theory and vocabulary that I have used in this article. Instead, I offered an extended piece at the end of the

sequence mixing criticism and prose poetry, which I entitled 'After words after art'. This, I think, is in the spirit of the 'mixed' or hybrid strategies beginning to be adopted in some examples of postgraduate research undertaken in the context of creative writing PhDs. This is described by authors of Lancaster University's on-line postgraduate handbook as a 'writerly approach' to the critical dimension capable of precipitating 'important realizations about the interrogative nature of creative work'.

Such formal hybridity again suggests something of the ekphrastic impulse's naturally 'excessive' nature, to return once more to the terms of Bann's argument. But Clark's text also evokes another feature of Poussin's art that confirmed and possibly exacerbated an *opposite* movement or process in my own collection. Clark spends a fair amount of time recording and meditating upon Poussin's taste for depicting miniature representations of human beings in his landscape paintings. Yet these delighted evocations of the miniature might also be considered in the light of Susan Stewart's reading of this widespread cultural phenomenon as a metaphor for the 'interiority of the bourgeois subject.' (1993: xii) She argues that there is a longing in the deployment of such figures of smallness for control and for closure: 'The miniature book', Stewart writes (44) 'always calls attention to the book as a total object'. But there is an equal desire to get beyond it, to get out of it: if she is correct in arguing that 'what disappears in writing is the body and what the body knows – the visual, tactile, and aural knowledge of lived experience' then the miniature may offer a way out of this familiar impasse. 'The writing of miniaturization', she adds (45), 'does not want to call attention to itself or to its author; rather, it continually refers to the physical world. It resists the interiority of reflexive language in order to interiorize an outside: it is the closest thing we have to a three-dimensional language, for it continually points outside itself, creating a shell-like, or enclosed, exteriority'. Looking back, once again, on the poetry in my collection, such theory enables another approach to the poem about Esther Inglis and her miniature books. On a more general level it suggests that the continual turn on my part – even in the face of an invasive, critically inflected prose – to metaphors of smallness, represents a desire to control and shape my own gallery or collection of verbal pictures and thus compensate for feelings of 'secondariness' and a suspicion of ekphrastic mimesis.

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Notes

1. Mieke Bal quotes Ernst Van Alphen, *Francis Bacon and the Loss of Self*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994) p. 24.
2. Loizeaux quotes Seamus Heaney, *Sweeney's Flight* (London: Faber, 1992) p. vii.
3. Bann quotes Georges Didi-Huberman, 'La couleur d'écume ou le paradoxe d'Apelle', *Critique*, 469–470 (1986) p. 610.
4. Berman's term, used frequently throughout his study, is 'élargissement'.

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