



# ALPHA BETTY'S CHRONICLES

from GULF

BRIAN KIM STEFANS

[/ubu](#) editions

*Alpha Betty's Chronicles*  
Brian Kim Stefans

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Originally published by Object Editions in an edition of around 100 in 1998.  
Republished in an edition of around 100 in 2000 by Harry Tankoos Press.

Revised edition ©2004 /ubu editions

Cover image: from the series "Invasion of the Thunderbolt Pagoda," 1968, Ira Cohen. The full series can be viewed in UbuWeb's Aspen magazine section, [ubu.com/aspen](http://ubu.com/aspen)

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ALPHA BETTY'S  
CHRONICLES

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/ubu editions  
2004

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able  
affadavit  
agent  
appearan**ce**

astroturf

br eath

churn

crank

effort

figure

fink  
gin

granted  
heave

lichened  
ligature

loathe

market  
model  
ontario

oust  
outta

piazza  
pus

scenario

señorita  
since

sine

toe

Variety

---

1.

AnXious big

hair on the b**ack** **cover** p<sub>hoto</sub> of

Marjorie

**P**erloff's **R**adical Artifice.

2.

Art

Exhibiti On:

"The Es say on William's" including

rubber breast s hang ing from the

wal l; fresh

a p ples imported from upstat e Ne w

York dai ly;

a da ist na iled-together junk construct

to

illustrate materiality of one of his

poem s; "Nud e DeSCe nding a StaircaSe" with

reco rd ing

of ju st the r ight kind of laug hte r

(ArMory

Show); snotty loo king FrenCh artists perambulating

thro ugho ut the gallery, indi fferent;

a spar RO w s mas he d aga i nst the floor.



3.

Being

/ a lover of punctuation, and such.  
Em /

4.

Benny

wanted smoking, Theodore not. And the  
cadets wanted nothing but rough housing,  
and a reserved space upon the  
couch.

5.

Bull!

I

threw the

clock a-

gainst

the

wall,

it's I ying,

it's cold.

Just inhuman.

Reducing

my green

house

issue,

I'm

opening up wide

into

the

field, I'm  
no lon-

ger  
sleeping.

I'm off  
to work.

6.

chapter

on reading an academic text on the  
"Snoopy Dog."

7.

Chinese guy who writes, with the  
 other staff, obscene things on the  
 receipts  
 at the restaurant in Chinese to his  
 customers.

"They admire him for his learning..."

Paragraph of stalled sentences.

Guy who approaches dogs  
 on the streets as they are  
 inspecting parking meters and  
 trees, etc., and encourages the m  
 with their  
 selection. She wasn't able to  
 be proud of  
 her son's knowledge, because, when he

finally  
 displayed it, in a large novel  
 about Korea,  
 family relations, how it was,  
 he got it all wrong. "He was  
 an American, that's all, which spoiled him."  
 Hypoglycemia,  
 always humbling. Not a good Jesuit,  
 he had plain prose (his Latin clipboard  
 left at home). Part about standing up for  
 the mushy poetry of the New  
 Yorker and Poetry,  
 "There isn't a line in all of your  
 Pynchon as pure as that - why isn't  
 it good enough to just record anymore?"

8.

Circle,  
square,  
possible, a  
passage  
- search  
exhaustive,  
exhumes  
no  
fossilized alembic,  
alchemist  
forte.



9.

G **r**atuitous sex and  
violence, plenty of it.

10.

He

tried to analyze her love of  
him through his love  
of another.

He tried to make

a stir fry with cheese - he thought  
it would melt on the top.

11.

He,

who felt it such a bother

to add any

element to his morning ablutions, or

to

start using contact lenses, now found himself  
pricking

himself with needles and lancets eight

or more times a day.

12.

HE RBAL QUICKIE

Strange, this night that  
(or gans

splashing away)

protects the  
mind, dark

with elegant burgundies,

grays

(the cigarette agrees,

challenging the cold day)

as it floats, ever secretly

towards the more challenging way

(struggling,  
ever decently).

13.

I'm always  
afraid of such confidence.

14.

I Don't

Have Any Paper So Swallow the Wafer

and

Shut Up

15.

I suppose I will forget.

but once I forget, I won't really care.

16.

I won't speak in front of other  
people.

Their silence obsesses  
me.

breakthrough  
wunch

hazing ritual  
Strap  
counter

standard demise  
logarithm

sort of a soporific



granted,  
snitching

on the **WON**der boy  
lasts

as long as fratricide  
as a debatable go  
currency.

You have no allies, and the doctors  
are sick of **YOU**.

17.

I'm a mes**S** **W**ithout  
 m**y**, my Guat**emalan** gi **rl** (sung to "Chin**a** girl")

I'm awas **h** wi**th** spuri**o**u**S**  
**ig**loos (**rains** **crashing** down,  
 worm

**muck** un**rav** **eling** my **sensitive** tissues, and I  
 take a **ll** r**hy** **mes** **as** **t** **hey** come),  
 p**U**tering until **nas**c**ence**

lifts to an **ar**got **these** c on **traptions**,  
**eg**g boiler**s**, **egg** peeler**s**,  
 egg eater**S**, d own ramps of **twisted** coat hanger**S**,  
 dro**pped** on a pl**at** **e**. I've fake

turbines (or investments  
 in them). Struggles that protract  
 asphyxiation (college,  
 in the Latin, or just drop the n from  
 asphyxiation, worsening the  
 verse until cramped enjambment  
 pipes in with clamors from the  
 infant's back room,  
 the monks, maidens and projections),  
 keeping labor stifled in baroque  
 misinformation.  
 That's all it takes, indecision, distraction.  
 walking, I chance upon a daffodilly,  
 "remark the pregnant daffodilly," in  
 its crowd  
 of jewels, in its creeds of

passions,

in its borrowed lake. I am going

to do the laundry, and meet a Polish

poetess, reading

the latest Nobel laureate, a populist with a history,

and she will remark that I don't understand, no

and should probably read Ruskin for saking

my Homi Babha, and also my

William Carlos

Williams. I will reply: "But

I am in almost total agreement !

I have just chanced upon a

daffodily! This recent exhibition

of Mark Tansey's graphic filler,

it's like a shot in the arm of the

avant-garde! and so I am returning to ill-  
considered  
origins." 'Then I will return home  
and take stock of the issues, and know  
before  
I begin that I have probably betrayed myself.

18.

**I**t appeared July 32, 1**9**<sub>95</sub>

19.

It rains  
- the Crops wither.

20.

It rains  
- the stopped watch  
shivers, makes a severed  
justice from the steaming ham, the  
frothing  
hens turning tabloid into stereo wings  
of justice.



21.

Light: doesn't Wanna

learn LANGUAGES any-

more, but Computerspeak

that's easy, crazy.

There is no poem,  
but

the room for a poem.

22.

The **s**oi |  
**m**eets **t**heir **d**istress.

23.

MisS **Prison.**

24.

My eye cUrrieS the otHerwise pure meat.

25.

Never

so sure: there is an entire Saturday  
stretched,

metaphysically, like a lax muscle, before  
him..

not like the ocean that hides a  
continent, rather,

a tongue that is willing for  
speech, exposed,

vulnerable, out of its cavernous socket  
and

a little disgusting. Shut up the dogs  
in

the back of the building,  
tether them, hide them

in your living room, on the television,

SHU T T HEM U P. So then the Wee kend  
 can achieve its Closure, archive  
 its hilarity.. a beach ball, heavy, primary.  
 He had attempted to learn the name of  
 the Loyalist, who cursing, lays a weight  
 eye on the bodega, and doesn't  
 mind  
 his passage of time in the sweltering heat,  
 reading bad Homer translations..  
 he portends lethargy, a wick  
 without wax, a canine without the order  
 of mastery. The beach is disgusting:  
 compels, repels, sucks and He looks  
 Sends back, in waves of ever-increasing  
 torment. up, spies the comet,  
 the comment, tries to lean back.. embrace

the luxury.

26.

Oh Carla, you  
Called.!

I  
was in perilous  
straits ,

unlikely

to  
form sentences, or

crack a code

(joke). Fine

to hear a  
friend

found

me, salivating



for b<sub>ore-</sub>  
d<sub>om</sub>  
befo<sub>r</sub>e...  
life that  
worried its crout<sub>on</sub>  
to dust.

27.

AFTER DAVI D GASCOYNE

One

founders in a castle  
of delight, marking

outside schedules with  
dreamy incompetence,

staining all the sheets  
with mercy,  
coward

of intelligible, intense

apogees of

mischief.

The candle founders, dark  
in cradled

infamy,  
like Ern Malley,  
like  
a teacher's surreptitious  
agenda, that  
paradise  
hidden in all the fancy  
books. Story  
goes:  
Once had a churl, traded  
him for a girl, got  
elemental  
diseases, not  
incendiary  
phases, nor  
a breath Of maturity,  
I mean, it was weird,

not having

m y gross ego

to confound me. But

that

joke

still bumps

me now, edging

on

into wakefulness. It

is a cold mashed potato.

It is a grump in the night.

speckled tortoise:

you ain't nothing new

to me! I've fun shoes

angling,

you see, toward

pret ernatural  
Vagran<sup>cy</sup>,  
and cor<sup>ny</sup> ties,  
and  
Crook<sup>ed</sup> hair, all  
a sympho<sup>ny of occurre</sup>nce  
suffocat<sup>ing</sup> bad chatter  
(in the sub<sup>urbs</sup>, where  
it  
begins, ado pts  
mercurial guis<sup>es</sup>, and  
coins a new theory), I've  
plenty  
to me<sup>SS</sup> With.

The group , nontheless,  
in

black shirts, white  
shorts,

red waist

bands, assemble outside,

brandishing tickets, all  
stable

in gestures

of seasonal discomforts

- no coffee cures,  
no

herbal expedients, no

craning  
for syllables.

28.

p<sub>rep</sub> ubesc<sub>ent</sub> emmanuelle

29.

ResourceS  
(discussing).

The

new structuralism  
cannot un-warp  
perversion's  
singularity.



30.

Scenario:

a young

girl congratulating her brother for making

his first talk show appearance. She

goes

to the dressing room, and sees that he is getting his face done.

When he turns around, he has

dense cakes of facial make-up...

She is shocked, but he says "nobody will

notice, it's stage make-up."

He is Jewish, and

the cut to the talk show hosts'

monologue shows that

he is doing an anti-semitic joke, Anyway, as the  
 little interview progresses,  
 with the talk show host going  
 on about himself, letting off  
 farts and things, the stage  
 make-up, which is clearly noticeable,  
 begins to slip off.  
 Eventually, he just pulls  
 the stuff back up, like in a face-lift, but  
 the mask continues to fall, making him  
 look ,  
 at moments, like his eyes are peering from  
 behind a death mask. Eventually, it  
 just falls off.

31.

S eCtion based on NirvaniS  
web Sites.

32.

She could go on forever  
analyzing the minute spaces between  
her  
thought. Or anybody else's  
thought, for that matter.

We  
won her. She has come. And taken  
the life from them, at  
the same  
time. So she plasters the walls with  
her oils. th

33.

SiSt<sup>er</sup>, where

are you, w<sup>ho</sup>  
pr<sup>omi</sup>sed  
me you'd lend

me twenty  
dollar<sup>s</sup>? it's

not  
zen-like of  
you to  
c onform

So poorly, with  
the clOck,

leaving me  
in neurosis!

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BRIAN KIM STEFANS

Hale  
the buzzer.

34.

Stasis is futile .

Story

of pe<sup>rs</sup>on who ex<sup>per</sup>iences sleep for  
the first time (coaching from  
friends, fee<sup>l</sup> of a<sup>cc</sup>omplish<sup>ment</sup>,  
naive  
first im<sup>pr</sup>es<sup>sions</sup>, etc.)

35.

stranger,

y ou. may grow up to be possessed by certain

ideaS, ef fusionS from the rump. The cut glass

will become your syllables, mister,

miser - you will vacate numerous

rooms before finding the one

that nameS you: Sir Charlatan. And

that's why there is something lacking

in your prepossession, your way with

corners and milk. The abstract on

the vitamins was boring reading,

but that's before vermilion covered

the syntax X with stories of

warS, sparring, dances; the rectilinear

applauseS didn't distract you.



On a purple bed, with the dawn  
 streaking across your breast (freed  
 breasts, shaking thighs, glow of  
 misapplied diligence  
 on her face - she is Pavlova Redivivus,  
 a flower-child - nobody told her  
 of the industrial revolution!), clocks burn  
 the misery  
 of unslept nights in a crown of  
 waking suburbs,  
 buses, and coffee carts, withering that  
 ill taste in your mouth, calling it an  
 addiction. One more  
 year in the  
 Gulag - when will they finally get your  
 bed linen  
 right, so you sleep all nested and comfortable

in the smells of your hometown, those  
 dan deli on  
 fissures, those maternal chokes, those  
 cars! FrankinSense  
 could do it. But the body rebels. Artificial,  
 fascist forms of education:  
 pronunciation  
 drills, charts and rubber shovels,  
 books balanced on head-whoops,  
 there it goes - could, indeed subtract  
 from your powers - your exhibitionism.  
 Or somebody could simply show you,  
 target,  
 it's the industrial revolution - and it's  
 coming  
 to a theatre near you!

the

hype of me, so American, I wander  
fitfully in sleep's cauldrons, hot as an

Old novelist that's forgotten his themes.

That's my sin: so cold in

leg, no gle

ever sold / / satisfied me.

37.

The  
mad dictator  
made the  
trains

run well,  
so punctually,  
no one questioned  
his demeanor:

mean.

The season's

change, all's caught

in summery

surprise:

so reasons

otherwise luminous  
demesne

was darkened: not  
a spark  
of sense, or  
non sense.

Redactor

of histories, of lore  
- he jerks off  
in the park

seeming  
so teasing  
to, really,  
no one. He

is a wonder

of abject pleasing,

of vagrant pleasure's teeming,

and

th us

wakes, pissed.

The mad dictator

is split:

one half

counter-parliamentary,

one bit

running with us

toward liberty.

But

never, never, in

fact, fruitfully

conVer<sup>sational</sup>.

So wh<sup>e</sup>n the head c<sup>o</sup>unt's in,  
h<sup>e</sup>'s out  
in the random li brary,

d<sup>o</sup>ing  
arith<sup>metic</sup>.

They voted him in, no<sup>n</sup>eth<sup>e</sup>les<sup>s</sup>.

He  
was a resounding voice of dif<sup>f</sup>er<sup>e</sup>nce .

Not too hygienic,  
not  
so deluding.

38.

The paper is  
still there...



39.

The plans  
for the stadium are always being  
postponed.

Tedium, too, falls, like the five-year  
plan, like a curtain of swans  
down, over every  
child and lover.

40.

The **TOTAL**  
eaters fan club.

They  
argue about **Cooking sausage**: "I'm not  
going to use  
a fucking teaspoon every time I cook a fucking  
Sausage:"

41.

They die, or they go to heaven  
without dying.

42.

They stocke<sup>d</sup> up on  
three varieties of soda: cherry, regular,  
diet.

43.

This is our own story, with  
 beginning and end. Who tries  
 to make a farce of  
 it, tells us we're troubled, infants,  
 jerks  
 -  
 that has been the standard experience of each  
 new generation, just getting  
 on. But we're wary  
 (or should be) of such oppositions. And  
 keep  
 gurgling our nonsense - until its age  
 its clamor, resounds  
 in the empty volume  
 of this gymnasium that we've

been aligned within.

44.

Voyans,  
or The Structuralist Nightmare Goes  
Public

45.

# Waver<sup>ing</sup>

bet<sup>wee</sup>n luck and ze<sup>n</sup> (s ent <sup>t</sup>he planes  
down) the UN US interchange<sup>able</sup> demanding new  
syntax  
from the market<sup>s</sup>.



46.

we had the author  
of "The Western Canon" living in our building.  
we thought to place a small porcelain  
cannon  
outside his door, but we never did  
it.

47.

What have we here? (drama or design?)

48.

What's this got to do with my first  
 communion?

What's this got  
 to do with the new reunion?

What's  
 this got to do with the sliding scale?

What's this got to do, that we're  
 going nowhere?

The heroes  
 are all hermaphrodites in my hanging

paper lantern,  
 they talk when  
 they weep: it's magic, like a

Chri**st**mas tr**ee**

**i**n **A**pril. **S**everal **a**nts**y** **f**an **z**in**e**s

I've collected **o**n **m**y **f**r**o**nt  
**p**or**ch**...

**b**ut **t**he **w**ind **d**on't **b**low **n**o

**m**ore, and the **f**ir**e**man' **s** **n**o**t** home.

49.

What's this...

something for my mailing

li

st?

This isn't going to be good for

my bulimia.

Just call me Paradise

Theatre (his interest in St<sub>yx</sub>).

50.

W ill  
starvation drive an artist out  
of his tomb?

51.

Winte<sub>r, too,</sub>  
has <sub>i</sub>ts pa<sub>r</sub>a<sub>d</sub>igms.

52.

You

must find solace in the charge, and

resent.



53.

You **te**nd **t**o **se**e **th**ings in **bl**ack and  
**w**hite; I **te**nd **t**o **se**e **th**ings **W**ith  
**th**eir **gr**ays in **bet**ween, and **ev**en  
**th**e **occ**asio**na**l  
**bu**rs**t** **of** **col**or.

54.

You'll see

that there's a sea on, a reason

the blackouts shrugged and

persisted, dilettantes

a figure of hope

likely

to be amusing

to nobody.

That's

when you cared

and cash and

Carried the cigarette

charm

-ing

lighter -

the paradise for keepsies.

Burning

holes in the cement (trying to fathom

what your mother meant

by that

code, her

matchbook (secret

matchbook)

contained

your picture, my

puncture, her wound -

pink elephants.

There is coffee on the table

there is syrup  
in the milk,

there is movement  
on the perimeter,  
there is a  
shogun warrior

and there is a ring  
of saliva

and there shall be calm in the evenings

- afterwards  
we played  
injunS

and plagues.  
Warning:  
parables.

And easy cutlet  
and lawn  
chair.

Freedom is an afterthought,  
after love

suggested the cons titution. Carlyle

popped out of the open box. He  
screamed,

another talent wasted on portable  
fictions.

Scram,  
beat it.