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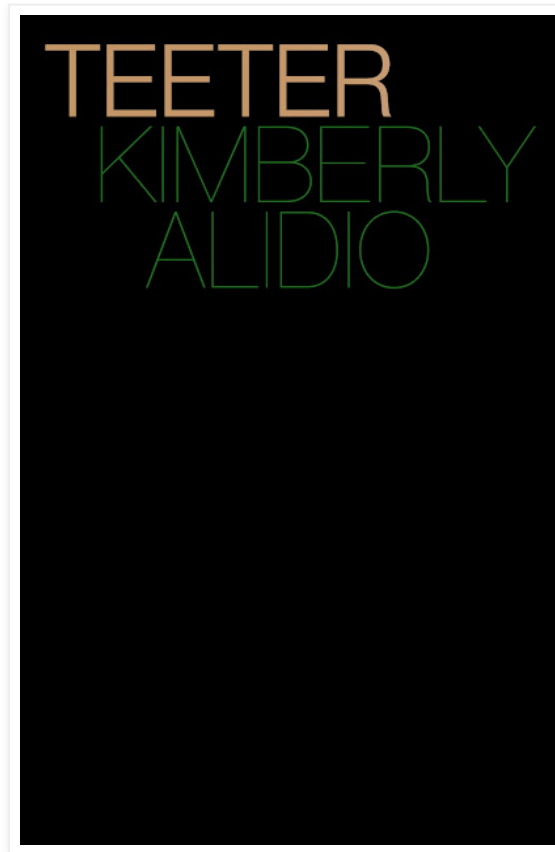
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Sunday, July 16, 2023

Kimberly Alidio, Teeter

Everyone who happens to live where

my father's family happened to live at the time of
naming has names beginning
with the same letter as mine. A name
cuts off the unruly sequence of
discovering a new thing topped off by
a moment of awareness one's beholden to
something new. Of retrofitting one's
classical senses: *brown bag*, *al-Qamqám*
in disregard of discovery's
doctrine. Even reducing anomaly or
variation to naming is enchanting. An old
catalog of names is the old story of
mine. A dream is round & uncertain



The latest from [Upper Hudson Valley, New York poet Kimberly Alidio](#), following [after projects the resound](#) (Black Radish Press, 2016), [: once teeth bones coral :](#) (Brooklyn NY: Belladonna*, 2020) [[see my review of such here](#)] and [Why Letter Ellipses](#) (Chicago Il: selva oscura press, 2020) [[see my review of such here](#)] is *Teeter* (New York NY: Nightboat Books, 2023). The three sections that make up this collection—“HEARING,” “AMBIENT MOM” and “HISTORIES”—are built as self-contained structures, whether long poems or suites, all of which explore through different elements of patterns of sound and rhythm, bouncing across line breaks and long sentences. “the occasion to / try out consonants / is when the cry / cuts into / another language,” Alidio writes, as part of “AMBIENT MOM.” A bit further down the page, writing: “this composing / in unlearned / languages // prenatal perceiving + / processing prosodic patterns / a Pangasinan of the everyday / palpability of experience [.]” She writes a polyvocality; threads of history and language, existing as a kind of single, ongoing sentence. This work is expansive and experimental, including a cluster of “Autohistoriography” poems in the third section, which suggest a furthering of what [Fred Wah](#) once coined as “bio-text,” employing a life-writing, but one propelled, first and foremost, by language; or even, far earlier, as [George Bowering](#) wrote his first person language prose poems, *Autobiology* (1972). As Alidio’s “Autohistoriography of Arrival at a River” begins:

Divorcing one's queer partner is a chance to divorce one's art community, one's social circle who gives one visibility & cultural milieu. & this was both a nightmare & a dreamy comfort. "Why are malls so depressing?" asks S. We were queer children, in some kind of girlhood, in the suburban '80s, when it was the height of sociality & familial reproduction to be dead inside, to feel nothing, at least, to feel not much of anything. Isolation is not always the queer person's precarity. As S explains, for such a being, isolation is a radical choice. We want an alternative to the binary that accounts for being a "woman" whose "community" once destroyed her. After all, one can love only one person at a time, someone says. & one must train one's love toward the proper object, no one outright says. The romance plot is key to operations of brutal competition in public & private spaces. Varda's *Le bonheur* is brilliant in showing the replaceability & interchangeability of blonde partners. Amacher's "sound characters" & "sonic figures."

There is such a propulsive language, in both cadence and purpose, and one that seems to incorporate elements of the lyric journal, whether the late [American poet Bernadette Mayer](#), a poet referenced within, or the journal-lyric of Alidio's partner, [Stacy Szymaszek](#). Again, Alidio utilizes subject, but as a means to and even through an end. As the poem "The summer I was born" begins: "two artists made durational works // In NYC & MA, Bernadette Mayer conducted an 'emotional science project,' in which every day / of my birth month was spent shooting a roll of 35 mm film, recording audio & writing // On the day of my birth, she wrote // 'I must have no respect for nothingness to photograph these scenes with sand or snow off / monument valley road the road in the valley of the same mountain monument mountain, a whole / series of them a whole series of photographs & one monument & I get a whole new picture of / myself, where is your driver's license he said, you are drinking beer' [.]" There is a durational feel to this particular work, at least one of a sense of ongoing thinking, or ongoingness, from one point forward, from one cover across to the next. As the poem "I might as well connect the dots between," set amid her suite of prose-explorations that make up the third and final section:

the data flow of archives & internet algorithms & this anecdote. Generate text, language, drawings, associations around the odd detail, the clashing word, the weird thing that rubbed me against the grain like a pinhole onto large-scale contradictions & social thinking. Events, figures & even tactics of glitching radically disrupt both the flow of data & the binary categories of IRL & online. Activate the text. Get distracted but try to leave a trace of where your body-mind goes. My recall of sitting in running tights at the threshold of the archive is an affective mix of shame, disorientation & pleasure. That I was a kind of glitch. Intone it. Recall that many talismanic amulets are inscribed with spells that need to be read aloud to set the magic in motion. I walked into the house of the archeon, I was processed & regulated in its anterooms & I was then identifiably young, brown, a sweaty cis-woman, both a product of multiple colonialism & a U.S. historian. Let's attune to the quiet & the noise

[rob mclennan](#) at 8:31 AM

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