

ALPHAVILLE

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“And because I love you everything moves—
One need only advance to live, to go
Straight forward towards all that you love
I was going towards you
I was moving perpetually into the light”

—Paul Eluard

“Listen to me, you normals! We see the truth that you no longer see. This truth is, that there is nothing true in man except love and faith, courage and tenderness.”

—Lemmy Caution in Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*

ALPHAVILLE

1

A burning candle
drains echoes

from golden haulms.
I just keep losing

my noise. One
prayer quitclaims

rain shadows.
The umbel's veiled

wax xylems—yellow,
zinc: zoom yens:

xeme wings vroom
under

the sea's rifting,
querulous praise.

2

Only naïve mortadella
leaks kama juju.

I heave
gangplanks forward,

expecting
durutti columnists

bearing attitude
and bikini creases.

Devil-may-carefree
Etruscans

fling grappa
hitting, instead, junior

Kiwanis leaders.
Mind-boggling!

3

No one promotes
quacksalver remedies, save

tsetse users
vis-à-vis whatchamacallits?

Xenogenesisists?
Yosemite Zoo's

zany young xylophagous
werewolves vilipend

uterine tree spikers,
Rescind Q-tip peens!

*Our necrotizing memes
load kewpie juice*

*into Herbert George's fedora!
Ersatz doggerelists!*

4

Come back, Attaboys!

Air bladders can

deploy early, freeing
gas heads in joining kingfish.

Look Ma, no
orchestral pit queens

revealing sham teats.
Undine venom

will Xerox
yap zappy zealots,

yanking xebecs
with varicose undertows.

The sword repos
quill pens.

5

Once, Nanking
machine linguists

kludged jowly
infinite hoops.

GE found
elegant designers

cantering behind
alpha and beta.

Cambridge data-
gloved egg-

heads found
government head-

hunters implanting
jinx.

6

Karl “laissez-faire” Marx’s
noblesse oblique

projections quelled
runaway

Salisbury tartar usurers.
View Walloon!

X-C youngsters
zigzag Zatopek

yawing X-axis Way.
Voltaire urged

tactical sales
resistance,

*Quit placating
outré nabobs.*

7

Milanese lobbygows
keep jetpacks

in hidden grottoes.
Fast escapes

demand cobelligerents.
Beams aimed

at bean counters
deliver easy facts.

Getaway hacks
in Jalalabad

keep loose
Mausers

near ornate
palazzos.

8

Quaffing rum,
Sweet Tooth's

Uncle Vito
waxed

Xanadu,
You zakuskahead!

*Zabaglione,
yakitori, xenopus*

*were very
unguent treats.*

*Serving rare quail?
Piquant ortolan?*

*Nouveau mousse?—
latched-up kudos.*

9

Japanese ice
hockey goalies

fizz eau
de cologne before

army ants.
Bracket creep

drains euros
from grave huckleberries

in Juba, Kansas.
Licorice mist

nebulizes ornery
Praetorian quadrupeds.

Remember, swallow
the unnatural.

10

Vostok winged
xenotransplantationers

yonder. Zooty
zoukistas

xeriscaped water
viroids until

tertiary syphilis—
rapacious quicksand—

poured out, northward,
making love

knots
jabber-wonky.

In Hollywood—
Godard figure eights.

11

Dance crimes
beguine!

An accessory before
curtain datum

eats forbidden grapes
(helps in jumping).

Kaffeeklatsch liberals
moo nous

outcaste principles.
Queer radicals

slouch toward
universal

vroom wares—
X-out your zesters!

12

Zoey's xonon
was valued

under toad spit
regimes.

Qwerty
police ordinances

now mandate
latch key

jock itching.
Heartbroken Gods

fight expenditure
disorders—

cloistering, bulimia
and access brokering.

13

Casting die
edge forward,

grabbing history
in jaws

kept locked—
marked necro

on pelt quipu.
Raree show

trapezes use
vicuña with

xenobiotic
yellow zags.

Zapata youth:
xu warriors.

14

Veins ululate.
The ship rides

qualmless.
plaintless. One

night, magpies
lilting

Kansascity jazz
in high-hat

Glaswegian
fada emporiums

drank
Chenin Blanc

and a beatific cord
dead ends.

15

Forget green hills,
I jaw.

Knotgrassed
lawn mowers

needle out,
paring quarry

roses, soft taxing
urgent violets.

When xenocrysts
yellow, zappy z-

lines yaw x-legs, west—
vexing undertows

to sunsets,
ripening quietus.

16

Prairie oompah
nurses mau-mau

leitmotifs. KGB's
jukebox intonates

hardcore gabba
from Euro

détournement
conceptualists (Berlioz

and Autechre).
Before chess,

Duchamps
eroticized foie gras.

His inamorata?
Jalapeño knockwurst.

17

Luna moths,
nightglow, orange

pekoe, quayside,
red spiders

tat, undulant
velocipedes weave

xenias.
Years zeroize.

Zills yearn.
Xuzhou

weeps vines.
Umbrella trees

stalk,
raining quirks.

18

Passages
of new moonlight

lick kudzu jiggers.
I hear glass

fish, erasing
downriver, coal

black, aswarm.
A blackbird calls

duskward, etching
frangible glitches.

Hanging in jackets,
kestrels lynch

mice, noosing
on parabolas.

19

Quonset root systems
terrace using

variable worms,
XL yoofs

zooming z-waves.
Youthful Xavierians

want virtuous
udder tracts.

Some readers
question Peter's

ohm
née

“Molotov lox-tail”—keeping
Jekyll in Hyde.

20

Gatorade fuels
esprit de corps between

anomie. A black caution
descends (exit flies).

Glass harmonicas
issue jetty kisses—

longhorn moue.
Night owls

peddle quaint réchauffé sounds.
Trombonists ululate

vipers, wailing: XTC
Yardbirds, Zombies,

Zorn, Yo-yo, X,
Wire, Velvet Underground.

21

“Thorazine smiles
reveal qualities previously

outside new maths.”
lectured Kepler.

Joining in hallowed
gallow’s funnies

Einstein declared,
“Can bloody arts

and barren crafts
divine enclitic facts?”

Galileo howled,
“I’m junkyard kinky!

Living minky!
Noodle our pinkies!”

22

Quince rows
segue to umbilical, vascular

willows, xenial yuccas—
zygotic zogos.

Your xi-shaped wisteria
vamps upward

toward sunlight,
rethreading quintessence.

Pools of nervous
maple leaves

knell, juddering
into helpless

glaucous folds.
Each day cans beauty.

23

April?—Aunt Bereft.
Crocus drifts

edge forward. Grass
has industrial

jealousies, kamikaze
leanings, making

numerical order
providence.

Quern rocks
slough tow-flax.

Umbelliferous vines
wind XS yetis.

Zamzummims?
Zombie yentas!

24

Xiphisternum wielding
vibrists up-end

the soft Rach-
maninoff. Quartets

pissed on Novocain
may lose

kopeck juice
in Herzegovina, going

for euphoria—dead cat
bounce—as after

brunch caesuras
deaccession

encomium
from gracile haiku.

25

I'm jumpy.
Keeping lookout

means not observing
Peter Quince record

surf tunes using viola
with xylophone.

You're zero zero.
You're xenophobic.

We vaporetto, until
tony Sicilians rush

Q-ships, portside.
Onomastic *numen* Mafioso

look kewpie
(joining in huggermuggery).

26

Goldfinger fingers
ermine, daring

Connery's Bond
as a body contractor

digs excavating finks.
Green Hornet's

id jeopardizes
Kato's Lee.

Martial Nazarenes
once poxed

Queensbury's rules
starting trouble

under Vampirella's
wranglers. X Y Z!

27

Zambonis yaw,
X-ing west via

ultima Thule, sailing
Rimbaud Quai, parsing

old Norse moments.
Laity killers jump ice,

haunting gangster friezes.
Eunoia descends,

crowning Bök's
articulable antelope.

Brünnhilde calls down
elegant funk, gob-

smacking
hang-dogged Icelanders

28

Jell-O knees
lend mobocracies

naff off powers.
Q-tip racketeer's sense

tense under-the-table
variables.

When X-Box
yoo-hoos zing

Zealand's yobs, X-man
Werewolf vituperates

Übermensch talk show
rangers. Quip

pipsqueaks' only neo
modern love.

29

Killjoys jack
into hives guarded

from earplugs,
deciphering

coy beeps
and asquint bleeps.

Can dolorous
EOs free

golden handcuffs?
In Jolla

killjoy laureates
menace

nuanced obscurantistas—
Pah!

30

Quizmeisters retain
soft tonsils using

very wooly Xhosan
Yorkies—zealously.

Zagat's yackety-yaks
x-rated Wolfgang's

Vegas udderia.
The swank restaurateurs

quit pabulum orgies.
Needs make lambent kilns.

Jamestown Island harvests
ghosts, filament

entities, desiring
cheese blintz.

31

August
anchors

bashful coasts.
Dashing eggs

flutter
green,

hours in-
choate;

jade kestrels
land

mid-vale,
needing

only pale
quags.

32

Rowers stroke,
their up-bows violate

water. X-coordinates yield
Zebedee's zephyr.

Youth x wisdom?:
Voilàism.

Under torrents
scullers respire,

quadriceps pump, oarlocks
natter, making

largo, keels jangle
in high gee.

Fair evenings drag.
Chute brakes ache.

33

A-one bone
collars

dumb Eva's
flowering

good hearts.
In Japanese kite-

fighting
lean moggys

need onion
paper quarks.

Red stingray
tails

undulate
vagrant winds.

XXXIV

“Young Zuzu’s zlotys
yin-yang Xia-xia

who vamps up
to stay *rive qui*.”

Pop operas
need mufti librettos,

keeping jargon
in high gear fleers.

Every dog-tongued
cunnilinguist bears

adontia. “A bear
cauterizes

Desiree’s earnest
faggoting—glee happens!”

35

I, John Keats
like: martinis neat;

onions prepucent;
queens rigescent;

studying transcend-
entalism under

Vedic wisenheimers.
X yea-says

Zsa Zsa Yeats.
X worships vérité.

up-all-night
television, Shelley's

requiescat, quart pints
of naïve Molson's.

36

Larval karmahatmas
jot in Hindi.

Ganesh favors
elephantine delicacies—

Cheetos, Bonkers.
An ascending bindi

clarifies daybreak, each
face greets Holi.

In Jonesboro,
kindling longhorns

make no onerous promos.
Quixotic ranchers

spit Tabasco,
urging Vishnu, “Waken.”

37

X-chromosomes (yagi
zonks) zaftig,

yoking x-cathedra wonks
veldtward,

under the standard
radar.

Quitich patches
on New Mexico's

llama kibbutz
jollifies in heat.

*Go forward
elderly dude,*

*cognoscenti blooms
await.*

38

A beetle crash
dives, elytrum

first, gashing,
hardpan—impulsive

jumper, kamikaze
lunger, mocks no-fall-

to-your-death-zones.
Only po-faced Quaker-guns

reductio sad turdums.
Uninvented volt

weapons—
x-munitions?—

yank zoolatrists:
Zeitgeistward!

39

Yuri's xenon
wattage vexed

Ursula, the sexy
redhead

quietly pouring over
nuclear medicine

lab-notes.
Kabuki jawing

incensed her
greenlit fingers.

Even daylight
caused brainfrying

animus. Ah,
biology chain drives.

40

Evening
fluoresces

giving
hawkweed

ideas/
jonquil

knowledge;
lore

makes
narrow

omens.
Pale

quaestors
recess.

41

Standard tonsil udders vary,
wildly. Xerox

yes-men (zarry
Zeligs) yackety-yak.

XFLers, wary
vertebrae upbraiders

talk sod raree.
Quaint politicians

orate, nary
mere loco.

King Jarry,
instructed his grand farceur:

enzoo dada, coo—
bark away!

42

A beach—
Caribou Dunes—

each face
generates

hindsight. I just
keep

longing.
Muskie

nuzzle off
platform

quays.
Rib-caged sterns

turn
unaccountably violet.

43

When xassafrassed
young zimmerwaldians

zoutch yeasty xeres
we vaqueros

unbridle the steeds.
Realpolitik quidnunc posses

only needle
maternity lounge karaoke jacuzzi infants.

Homebodies
google for

ebony doors,
concealing

bald
amphigorians.

44

Among blue
carnations

dandelions
edge first, growing

heavenward
in jest, keeping

leopard moths
nosing,

on
posie cues.

Rose squirrels
tut

under vairish
weeds.

45

Xaviera yatters, zeugmas
zephyring, yexing

xyresic words, verbs,
utterings. *That's so*

redolent, Quentin purrs, oléing,
no man's land keeps

junkyards interesting.
Harry's grave face

eyesdinner—char
breton, appolonaire—

assassin bugs
clicks, divining

entropy from gunboat
hocus-pocus.

46

I joined Kodachrome
leaving

modus
(notice?) operandi.

Pouter quabs
(*risus*

sardonicus)
tailed unto Via Warhola.

Xenagogues yarned.
Zoppo zoozoos yawned.

Xylomancers
(wooden visionaries) urged—

take slide rulings!
Qua prophecies?

47

Orange narcissus
make Lake Kalpa

jolie-laide. Island
hares graze

freely enjoying daisies,
clover, bunchberries

and asters.
Beetles chirrup

demanding ears
for gracile haikus.

In July
king lobsters make

nod offs part
quaps.

48

Rain shadows trench
up valley, where

xiphoidic yetis
zzzz. Zneesy yews,

Xmas winter.
Veiled ughten tightens

Sunday's reign.
Quantum physics orders

new moons; Lemmy's
keypad juts.

I hear geese—
febrile,

eidetic. Dawn's chador
breaks abecedarians.

49

Alphaville baddies caper,
deciphering

elegies
for goo-goo.

Hahas
in Jerusalem

keep look-in.
My needs

open puddles,
quietly raining

spirea, tracing
up valley, where

Xiuhtecutili yahoos:
Zedland!

About The Author

Peter Jay Shippy was born in Niagara Falls, New York and raised on his family's apple farm. He was educated at Northwestern, Emerson College and the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa.

Shippy's book, *Thieves' Latin* (University of Iowa Press) won the 2002 Iowa Poetry Prize. He has received fellowships from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

His poems and essays have been published widely, including: *The American Poetry Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Fence*, *The Iowa Review*, *Ploughshares* and *Verse*, among others.

Shippy is on the faculty of Emerson College.

