

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

BACKGROUND:



Soma is an Indo-Iranian ritual drink made from pressing particular psychedelic and energizing plants together. In Vedic and Zoroastrian traditions the drink is identified with the divine. The word Soma is derived from the Sanskrit and Indo-European tongues meaning "to press and be newly born."

Somatic is derived from the Greek, meaning the body. In different medical disciplines it can mean different things, from a cell or tissue, or to the part of the nervous system that controls sensations and movements.

My idea for a (Soma)tic Poetics is a poetry which investigates that seemingly infinite space between body and spirit by using nearly any possible THING around or of the body to channel the body out and/or in toward spirit with deliberate and sustained concentration.

The writing of (Soma)tics is an engagement with the thing of things and the spirit of things.

My first investigation into (Soma)tic poetry is a series I called *(Soma)tic Midge*. This is a 7-poem cycle where I fully immerse myself in a single color for a day. The order of the 7-poem cycle being the natural order of color, starting with RED, then ORANGE, YELLOW, GREEN, BLUE, PURPLE, then ending with WHITE. PURPLE being the transformative, natural pivotal color which is born ONLY WHEN the starting color RED (which is the first element of the Zodiac, Aries, or ORIGINAL FIRE) and the last color BLUE (which is the last element of the Zodiac, Pisces, or ADVANCED WATER) bleed together.

When I say fully immerse myself in the colors I mean ONLY eating foods of the color of the day, as well as wearing something or keeping something of that color on or around me at all times.

THE FILTERS:

In (Soma)tic Poetry THE FILTERS are words which function as focal points for the information and notes gathered from the exercises. With THE FILTERS you take all of your notes and begin to write poetry about or through these words, shaping and editing as you go. But it's important to note that THE FILTERS are only guides, and to help you shape the poem. Also it's good to use at least 2 FILTER words to prevent the conversation from becoming entirely internal or confessional, meaning that with the extension of extra filters the worldview will broaden as the poem takes shape.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

1.) Wash a penny, rinse it, slip it under your tongue and walk out the door. Copper is the metal of Aphrodite, never ever forget this, never, don't forget it, ever. Drink a little orange juice outside and let some of the juice rest in your mouth with the penny. Oranges are the fruit of Aphrodite, and she is the goddess of Love, but not fidelity. Go somewhere outside, go, get going with your penny and juice. Where do you want to sit? Find it, and sit there. What is the best Love you've ever had in this world? Be quiet while thinking about that Love. If someone comes along and starts talking, quietly shoo them away, you're busy, you're a poet with a penny in your mouth, idle chit chat is not your friend. Be quiet so quiet, let the very sounds of that Love be heard in your bones. After a little while take the penny out of your mouth and place it on the top of your head. Balance it there and sit still a little while, for you are now moving your own forces quietly about in your stillness. Now get your pen and paper and write about POVERTY, write line after line about starvation and deprivation from the voice of one who has been Loved in this world.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

2.) In your home alone. Take a bucket or basin of room-temperature water to your front door and strip naked. Put a piece of paper or thin notepad under the bucket and lay a pen nearby. Stand in the water. Get used to being naked while standing in water at the front door. Look through the peep hole. Look for a long time at the world out there. Then look above you, and at the door, the walls, and make note of something you hadn't seen before -- maybe a cobweb or crack in the paint. Every once in a while stretch your arms over your head stretch as high as you can stretch stretch stretch then relax in your bucket. If someone knocks or rings the bell it's your good fortune! Look at them through the peep hole while saying nothing. Maybe have a friend come over at a certain time to knock and say, "Are you naked in your bucket of water?" Don't answer, you're a poet, this isn't time for idle chit chat, besides that you can warn them ahead of time that you won't be answering them. Stretch, and be quiet. Step out of the bucket and sit your poet ass on the floor, get the paper from under the bucket and whistle short, loud bursts of whistle four times. Then write. When you feel the need for more whistles, pause, whistle, then write some more.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

3.) Eat a little dark chocolate before getting on the subway. Sit in the middle of the car, and don't get on a car where there are no seats for you. Sitting is best for this. Eat a little more dark chocolate. For the next few stops examine the interior of the car with care. Then close your eyes, and as the car rolls on its tracks make a low hum from deep inside you. Don't worry, no one can hear you, trust me, I've tested this with a friend. As soon as the car stops write nine words as fast as you can before the train moves again. These are not words you were thinking about, just write, don't question what you write, just write. Repeat this humming and writing for nine stops. Get off the train. Find a bench or patch of grass. Now look at that first set of nine words carefully, then write something about the words. What do they mean to you? Then move onto the next set of nine words and repeat. After this is finished poke around all this writing and see what kind of poem is hiding inside it. It's there, trust me it's there. You've just emerged from the underground, rumbling and grumbling and there is something waiting for you to discover it. (Please Note:) Try to not engage with anyone while in the car, or while leaving the subway. Don't break your concentration. Maybe have a little note prepared to hand a friend you might run into which explains why you can't talk to them. Don't wait for their response, just hand them the note and get about your business, you're busy. And they will understand, don't worry, just get going for your poem.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

4.) Take a red magic marker and draw a 9 on your naked chest. Draw the 9 from the bottom up. Start the tip of its tail at your naval and sweep UP to have the round circle of its head in the middle of your breasts. Put on a shirt that conceals the 9 from other eyes. Go out to the corner and quickly choose a direction. At the next corner choose another direction. Don't think about where you are going, instead spend the time between corners looking carefully at the world. Finally come to a complete stop at the 9th corner. Look across the street and focus on four different objects. Draw a line to connect them, looking carefully at what's inside this square you've just made. What's outside it? What's half-in? Imagine you string lights to make the square. Imagine its contents at night, dimly lit. Imagine this square a year from now. Ten years from now. Now go somewhere quickly and write, run, run to a place where you can write. Suddenly the city, your city, is a place where places to write come to mind, you must always know those places at all times.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

5.) Go to a bookstore. Go to the History Section. Close your eyes and randomly choose a book. Turn to page 108. Read that page and pull one word you like from it. Go to the Romance Section, repeat process. Then go to these other 7 sections and repeat process: Gardening, Religion, Biography, Children's, Cookbooks, Law, Horror. After you've collected these 9 words sit in the store, even if you must sit on the floor, then write a poem which includes these 9 words. This poem must be immediate, and it must be written in the store where the 9 words were found on page 108 of 9 different books. I hope you show me your poem one day. Thank you ahead of time.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

6.) If you can be naked for this exercise it is best. Plan to be outside for 9 different sunsets. Get yourself comfortable and seated an hour before the sunset. For 50 minutes focus on your feet. Look at them. Where have they walked in this world? Are they tired? How do they smell? Can you suck your toes? Give them a good taste. But mostly give them some serious concentration, they're your feet, no one else's. This is a meditation for your feet. Imagine they had their own thoughts and told you some things about themselves you did not know. Think of nothing but your feet. Think about one, or both of them gone. Or damaged. Think of them in every way you can imagine thinking about them. Then for the remaining 10 minutes before sunset, just before twilight, write at a fever's pitch about some of those thoughts you have had about your feet. For the other 8 sunsets focus on each of these 8 different body sections, one per sunset: Legs, Genitals, Naval, Breasts, Arms, Hands, Neck, Head (exterior), Head (interior). If when you meditate on your genitals you feel the urge to masturbate that is fine, but try to not orgasm because we want to keep the energy challenged and in flux, not depleted. Of course if you do orgasm don't worry, no big deal. But try to keep yourself from doing so. And if you do masturbate try to not do it for the full 50 minutes, there are many things your genitals would like to tell you if you would only imagine that they could. After the 9 sunsets are completed, take your 9 feverish streams of writings and on a fresh piece of paper put the first word from the first sunset meditation, then the second word on the fresh piece of paper is the first word from the second meditation, and so on, keep going until all the words from all the writings are now fully mixed and on one document. From here you must become the natural editor you are, looking closely, moving words, removing words, working it into the poem that's waiting to be found. Take your time with this, it's nobody's business how long you take.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

7) Okay, so you find out you're going to die, or be killed later today. What meal would you like? What meal is your favorite? Make that meal for yourself. Sit and write a few lines from the smell and sight of it. Put your ear to the plate and move it around with your fingers or fork, or chopsticks. Listen, smell, look, and eat it, slowly, very, very, slow, ly, eat, it. It's your favorite meal, it's your last meal, enjoy every single flavor. Promise me you're slowly eating? Good. As soon as the last bite is gone move quickly into the bathroom. Blast the cold shower while you strip naked. As soon as your clothes are off then shut the water off. Light a candle, shut off all lights, then sit on the floor of the cold, wet shower with your candle and write your poem, addressing some of what you wrote earlier about your final meal. If someone should catch you and call you a weirdo yell back, "YES I AM NOW LEAVE ME ALONE I'M BUSY!" You are busy, and you are a weirdo, and it's a marvelous thing, now go back to your writing. Forget about them, it's not your fault you're more interesting than they are.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

11) Use blue or purple ink for this please, if you have it. (Purple is best!) You also need a sheet of white, unlined paper. Place the pen (purple ink the best!) and paper on the floor in front of a rocking chair. Sit in the chair very still for a few minutes with eyes closed, keeping track of your breath. Then breathe deeply three times, and begin rocking wildly, saying out loud as you rock, "OO-WAH" over and over, nine times. On the ninth count of rocking with "OO-WAH" throw yourself onto the floor and QUICKLY and without thinking draw an X then a line from the X, and where that line ends draw another X. Now repeat this procedure of rocking and "OO-WAH" but when you fling yourself at the pen and paper this time start from the X where the first line had stopped, then quickly draw another line, then put an X where that line stops. Continue repeating until you have nine lines on the page. Now you have a map. Follow your map in whatever location you want, it's your map after all. You can follow it outside by streets and blocks, or in an empty parking lot, or field, or in your bedroom or kitchen. Or have your finger follow the map on the naked body of your lover (this one is my favorite!). But when you come to an X on your map, stop, pause to reflect on this spot where you find yourself. Jot down a few notes. When you have finished your map-following and note-taking you can then squeeze the poem out of the experience. It's there, it's in there.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

15) If you are Right Handed write two words on your right arm that you will say to someone today (if you are Left Handed write on your left arm). Write these words where no one can see them. Your energy leaves your body through this arm, you point with it, you throw with it, this is the arm you use when the world receives from you. Keep these two words in mind all day, touch the words on your arm from time to time when no one is looking. Ask people questions using the two words. Don't ask them about the words, but use the words in your question. Remember what they answer and write it down later. Alone at night place the sheet of paper with answers from people where you can clearly read it. If you are Right Handed your left hand is where energy enters. (Or right if you are Left Handed). Hold your left hand overhead while you write on another sheet of paper. Rotate the hand overhead, and flex its muscles, open and close it, move it, constantly move it, and with the other hand *WRITE! WRITE! WRITE!* Pause from writing (but keep the other hand flexing and moving overhead) to read the answers from people again, then write, let whatever needs to come *COME!* This is going to be beautiful. Relax with it, see what you've made. See what poem or poems wait inside the writing. **PLUCK THEM OUT!**

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

16) **YOUR BANANA WORD MACHINE:** (This is primarily for poets living outside tropical regions) LOCK THE DOOR AND UNPLUG THE PHONE, KILL all outside interference, you must NOT be interrupted because YOU are about to build and ignite your BANANA WORD MACHINE, and once it gets started it doesn't like to stop, for anyone, for any reason! You need: a banana, and pictures of: parrots, boa constrictors, leopards, jaguars, banana trees, men and women carrying bananas to trucks for export, OR anything else which has to do with banana production, or wildlife or anything else native to where bananas grow. No music. No noise. If there is noise use ear plugs. Strip down naked and sit on the floor with your pictures, your banana, pen and paper. Smell the unpeeled banana while looking at each of the pictures you have chosen to build your BANANA WORD MACHINE. When you settle on your favorite picture slowly open the banana, staring at the picture. Imagine this picture ALIVE at the moment it was taken and BE THERE, slowly opening the banana skin, smelling, taking small tastes. When you have absorbed the picture thoroughly, and feel sufficiently transported mentally, get comfortable on your back, then slowly rub banana into your skin wherever you most want to, but make certain to coat your solar plexus, throat, and THOROUGHLY coat your forehead. Feet, genitals, ass, and wherever else you most want to of course since this is YOUR OWN PERSONAL BANANA WORD MACHINE! Slowly chew a little of the banana, and put the skin on your chest as you stretch out on your back with your eyes closed and FILL YOUR BODY with the LOWEST possible HUM you can muster! SUSTAIN THAT HUM! Then relax in your quiet, hum again, keeping eyes closed. Slowly chew a little more, smell, then just relax in your BRAND NEW BANANA WORD MACHINE! When you feel quiet, and your muscles quite limber, slowly massage the banana into your forehead, slowly, softly at first, then deeper and FASTER in a circular, clock-wise motion. THEN SUDDENLY SIT UP inside your BANANA WORD MACHINE and write write write write write WRITE! HUM and massage your forehead again to keep your BANANA WORD MACHINE fully in gear and energized! Write, hum, massage, relax, repeat, repeat, keep going, keep going, you, are, writing, in, your BANANA WORD MACHINE! You will write some of the BEST poems of your life TODAY! *YOUR BANANA WORD MACHINE! LOVE YOUR BANANA WORD MACHINE!* Yellow splendor!

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

19) **YOUR GARBAGE SPEAKS:** SAVE YOUR garbage for a week, every wrapper, every box, carton, save it all. Rinse it out if you must, but it's better if you don't, better to SMELL it. At the end of the week go through each item, slowly, carefully, do it in a closed room, don't let anyone bother you. Don't answer the door or the phone, IGNORE THEM, you're busy looking at garbage to build a poem! Take some notes, write down interesting facts from labels, or the size of things, how they look, how you remember them before discarding them. Imagine where this packaging came from, factories, and before that fields and trucks and many many hands picking them, grinding them, printing with color and black ink. Take notes when thinking about these things. SMELL them one at a time with eyes closed, eyes opened, eyes closed again SMELLING, deeply SMELLING. Notes, take your notes. NOW GET NAKED AND GET IN THE BATHTUB, and go under water, blow bubbles. Go under again and stay under a little longer. DO THIS several more times then COME UP, dry your hands on the side of the tub and grab your notes, and grab your pen and paper and WRITE about drowning, pull your notes together to write a poem about drowning and you're about to die drowning BUT THIS IS what you want to share at the end. GO BACK UNDER the water again, then COME UP AGAIN and WRITE!

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

21) **LET YOUR TOES KNOW THE TRUTH:** Take account of how many times you're not saying or doing EXACTLY what you want to say or do in a day. How many times do you use a tone in your voice which is not honest? How many times are you polite when you want TO SCREAM? How much compromise does your day comprise? Take CLOSE account of this. DON'T LIE ABOUT IT EITHER! This is for you, no one else will know SO BE TOTALLY HONEST! What is your body like when you're not being who you are? How does it feel? Are your hands doing something in particular each time? Your feet? Your groin, your stomach, how does your body react when you are not REALLY you? At the end of the day take notes about this. These notes will be the formal outline for this exercise. After that, EVERY DAY FOR THE NEXT 7 days you will pay attention to the SIGNS OF DISHONESTY in your voice and your body, and whenever you are not who you REALLY WANT TO BE at any moment in the day. Each time you are being polite to your boss, or the baby-sitter, or don't say FUCK because there's a child in the room, EACH TIME you are not you, CLENCH YOUR TOES! CLENCH THEM! Every time, CLENCH THEM! At the end of the day are your toes tired of this? Are they feeling BETTER maybe? Soak your feet in hot salt water and WRITE WRITE WRITE as quickly as you can, EACH NIGHT for 7 nights after a day of TOE CLENCHING DISHONESTY soak them in hot salt water and WRITE with the pace only a FURIOUS YOU would know how to do! OPEN YOUR EYES wider than they're used to being open and WRITE, WRITE WITHOUT BLINKING if you can. WRITE! At the end of 7 days take a long time staring at your feet, your toes, look at them. Stick them in your face if you can, right up to your face and look at them. Take a magnifying glass and look at your feet. For 7 days your toes have been taking the brunt of your dishonest actions. How does that look? Take notes. How does that feel? Take many notes. STICK YOUR TOES IN YOUR MOUTH if you can. How does that taste? Now, take ALL YOUR NOTES, and using [THE FILTERS](#) "ARREST" and "BASE" shape your poem.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

24) **THROUGH THE REMAINS** (Dedicated to Dodie Bellamy for her essay, "Digging Through Kathy Acker's Stuff"). Read [this interview with Dodie Bellamy](#) for an introduction to the exercise. Choose an article of clothing that holds special meaning to you, especially if it's something someone you love gave to you. Wear it all day the day before the exercise, infusing the article of clothing with your body by living your day EXACTLY how you want to live. Give the clothes a full day of LIVING with your body, eating, drinking, loving how you want to. The next day take the clothes out into the world with you wherever you go with your notebook. Drape them on a tree, or bench, keep them near you like a doppelganger, like an old friend, like someone you need to know better. Take notes about how you're feeling about the clothes being in your life. What are all of these feelings? Was it given to you by someone you love? If so, when did you last see them? What were you talking about? Take notes, lots of notes. Place the clothes in a bag, keep the bag near you. Meditate on the bag. Then have just a portion of the clothes poke out of the bag. What can you see about them like this that you hadn't noticed before? Study the textures, and, what is it made from? Leather, wool, silk, what is it? Imagine the animals or plants it was made from. Can you see these animals and plants in the world before they were your clothes? Trains, boats, trucks, imagine these forms of transportation bringing the raw materials into the hands or machines that made these clothes you love. Take note, lots of notes. Wrap the clothes on you in a way you don't usually wear them. Take notes while they are on you. Wrap them around your head, and take many more notes. Hold them in your hands, close your eyes, imagine where they will go when you die. Imagine them in the world without you. Take notes, and if anyone interrupts you SHOO THEM AWAY, politely if you want, but get rid of them, YOU'RE BUSY! Now take all of your notes, and using **THE FILTERS** "FRICTION" and "HALLUCINATION" get to work shaping your poem.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

23) **DEATH AS DIRT AS POETRY IS:** Go to your local graveyard, spend some time searching for a spot to sit. Find a spot where no one will pester you, you're busy, you're here to write poetry, *not to be pestered with small talk!* When you have found your spot sit down on the ground. Take time to look closely at ALL OBJECTS at your feet, in the trees, etc. Find three objects, one of them on the ground, or at least touching the ground: your feet, a grave marker, tree trunk or roots, etc. The other two off the ground in a tree, a building, but make them things which are stationary so you can stay focused on them. Draw a triangle between these three objects. Focus hard on the contents of your triangle, keeping in mind that the ground object you have chosen connects to the dead. Imagine your triangle in different forms of light, darkness, weather, and seasons. Imagine someone you love inside the triangle dying. Imagine yourself inside it dying. Gather notes in this process, take notes, as many notes as you can about how you feel and what you feel. Then PAUSE from these notes to focus again on your triangle, THEN write QUICKLY AND WITHOUT THINKING for as much time as you can manage. Often it's these spontaneous notes which dislodge important information for us. DO NOT HESITATE to write the most brutal things that come to mind, HESITATE at nothing for that matter. Take some deep breaths and think about death by murder, war, cancer, suicide, accidents, knives, fire, drowning, crushing, decapitation, torture, plagues, animal attacks, dehydration, guns, stones, tanks, bombs, genocide, strokes, explosions, electrocutions, guillotine, firing squads, parasites, suffocation, flash floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, cyanide, poison, capital punishment, falling, stampedes, strangulation, freezing, baseball bats, overdose, plane crashes, fist fights, choking, etc., imagine every possible form of death. Take notes on your feelings for death at this point, DO NOT HESITATE. Now, TAKE ALL YOUR NOTES, and using [THE FILTERS](#) "QUICKEN" and "EMBLEM" shape your poem.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

28) **AMERICAN poem, AMERICAN poet, *the roots the roots the roots there are roots***: Go to a local government building or monument, courthouse, statue or prison, but a government structure, one paid for by all tax payers. This monument or building is something you paid to create, something you pay to upkeep. It stands for the collective stronghold of our nation, as Americans, as America moves and removes our collective fingerprints around the world as a military, as a business, as a structure of faces supplanting trust and empathy with a guise of trust and empathy under the guise of one flag. This is not to say an angry poem must ensue. This is just saying LET'S GET CLEAR. This is not to suggest you read up on American assassinations of leftist governments in South America, this is just saying KNOW what you already know to be true when coming to this poem. We're here as Americans. It's an American poem in a way that has roots, literally roots. Study the plants if there are plants. Study the grass around this government building or monument. Smell samples of the soil. What's around? See everything as best as you can, sit very still and look closely at the world as it always is around this structure you have come to today. DO NOT ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION WITH OTHERS. You're here for how you see it, how you see this structure, how you see our country. This is personal. The date presently is April, 2009. We are at war on more than one front, millions of lives have been lost, and who knows how many more are at stake as our tax dollars purchase bullets and bombs, prisons and worse. Look at this structure you have come to, and know you are paying for its upkeep. You have a claim to it today. Take a list of notes about the structure, but these will be the notes you glean from later, as these are not the real notes for the poem. Take another list of notes while investigating the plant life, the soil, the natural surroundings. Take yet another list of notes about the government structure, only this time take notes about WHAT it is made from. Is there wood? Is there metal? Write in your notes about trees and rocks, iron and oil. Write about the elements all these parts of the structure originated from, and how they arrived here by boat and truck. Take the notes of the government structure broken down into the finer notes of the natural elements the structure originated from, and combine those notes with the notes of the natural world surrounding the structure today. Weave these notes, as this is an exercise in weaving notes. Now with the FEELINGS you have of being an American TODAY, whose tax dollars continue to pay for the cost TRUE HUMAN COST of two wars, form these final notes into a poem BUT WITHOUT EVER mentioning the government structure. And without directly involving America by name. Write a poem as a poet of the world with feelings for our collective human costs of war. Write this poem through THE GRASS AND TREES you see around you. Now take all your notes, and using [THE FILTERS](#) "ALERT" and "EXILE" shape your poem.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

29) Go to a shopping mall parking lot with trees and other landscaping growing between the cars to create this poem. Find a tree you connect with, feel it out, bark, branches, leaves. Sit on it's roots to see if it wants you OFF! These trees are SICK WITH converting car exhaust and shopper exhale all fucking day! Sit with your tree friend. Don't pay attention to the cars coming in and out of the parking lot, you're here to write poetry, not to worry about what a lunatic you appear to be. Remember what our QUEEN poet of merging celestial bodies Mina Loy said, "If you are very frank with yourself and don't mind how ridiculous anything that comes to you may seem, you will have a chance of capturing the symbol of your direct reaction." Public Space is not easy in shopping mall parking lots, but calmly explain yourself to the security guard like I did when creating this exercise. They will train a camera on you, but the sooner you get rid of them the sooner you can train the camera of your brain. Take notes, feverishly at first. Use a magnifying glass to study the dirt, trunk, to look carefully at leaf veins and bark structure. Notes, take notes, writing quickly, as if you've just discovered a sleeping creature that may wake at any moment and ATTACK YOU! Smell your hand, smell a branch. Study then the sky and buildings and people and everything, every detail. Face one direction and stare for a few seconds. Close your eyes and while they're closed imagine what you saw. Open your eyes and notice what you missed when imagining what you saw. Study what was missed and where and how it exists in relation to your tree friend. Take notes. If you are right-handed then touch the tree with your left hand, for your left hand is the hand which absorbs the world. Then walk to other trees in the parking lot and touch them with your right hand, for your right hand is the hand which sends your messages OUT of you. Touching your right hand to the other trees sends OUT of you the message your tree friend put into you through your left hand. Take notes on what was said from tree to tree. What message were you carrying? Take notes while leaving. Later, at home, close your eyes and remember your tree friend, take more notes from this visit with your memory. Now take all your notes, and using [THE FILTERS](#) "TRACT" and "INITIATE," shape your poem.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

35) **ANNOINT YOURSELF:** Visit the home of a deceased poet you admire and bring some natural thing back with you. I went to Emily Dickinson's house the day after a reading event with my friend Susie Timmons. I scraped dirt from the foot of huge trees in the backyard into a little pot. We then drove into the woods where we found miniature pears, apples and cherries to eat. I meditated in the arms of an oak tree with the pot of Emily's dirt, waking to the flutter of a red cardinal on a branch a foot or so from my face, staring, showing me his little tongue. When I returned to Philadelphia I didn't shower for three days, then rubbed Emily's dirt all over my body, kneaded her rich Massachusetts soil deeply into my flesh, then put on my clothes and went out into the world. Every once in awhile I stuck my nose inside the neck of my shirt to inhale her delicious, sweet earth covering me. I felt revirginized through the ceremony of my senses, I could feel her power tell me these are the ways to walk and speak and shift each glance into total concentration for maximum usage of our little allotment of time on a planet. **LOSE AND WASTE NO MORE TIME POET!** Lose and waste no more time she said to me as I took note after note on the world around me for the poem.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

37) **TOUCH YOURSELF FOR ART:** There must be a piece of art near where you live that you enjoy, even LOVE! A piece of art that IF THERE WAS WAR you would steal it and hide it in your little apartment. I'm going to PACK my apartment TO THE ROOF when war comes! This exercise needs 7 days, but not 7 consecutive days as most museums and galleries are not open 7 days a week. At the Philadelphia Museum of Art hangs the Mark Rothko "Orange, Red and Yellow, 1961," a painting I would marry and cherish in sickness and in health, have its little Rothko babies, hang them on the wall with their father, and a portrait of my breasts to feed them at any hour. For 7 days I sat with my dearest Rothko. The security guards will think you're odd when you come for 7 days to sit and meditate. Never mind that, bribe them with candy, cigarettes or soda, whatever it takes to be left in peace. Bring binoculars because you will get closer to the painting than anyone else in the room! Feel free to fall in love with what you see, you're a poet, you're writing a poem, go ahead and fall in love! Feel free to go to the museum restroom and touch yourself in the stall, you may not be allowed to touch the paintings but they can't stop you from touching yourself, fantasizing touching and being touched by them. And be sure to write on the restroom wall that you were there and what you were doing as everyone enjoys a dedication to the details in museums. And be certain to leave your number, you never know what other art lover will be reading. When you return REMEMBER THAT there is no museum in the world with rules against the use of binoculars, information you may need for the guards if you run out of cigarettes and candy. Map your 7 days with extravagant enhancements: mint leaves to suck, chocolate liqueurs, cotton balls between your toes, firm-fitting satin underwear, things you can rock-out with (in secret) for the art you love. Take notes, there must be a concentration in note-taking in your pleasure-making. Never mind how horrifying your notes may become, horror and pleasure have an illogical mix when you touch yourself for art. Once you gather your 7 days of notes together you will see the poem waiting to be pulled out of a long and energizing dream.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

47) **(SOMA)NIMAL COMMUNIQUE: DAY ONE:** On 8 small pieces of paper draw 8 different animals with crayons, magic markers, pens, paint, or whatever. Elephants, bats, tigers, wolves, and even supernatural animals like angels, dragons, leprechauns, horse ghosts. Make one of these your spirit totem, or at least an animal you feel an affinity for. On the back of the drawing write something like, "HELLO, my name is Craig, and I am a dragon from rural Pennsylvania. You might have some questions for me, and I might have some questions for you." Create an e-mail address to include with your message. Go out into public and leave each animal for strangers to find on subways, in libraries, at hair salons, or taped to a restroom stall. **SAVE** your totem animal for last. Research the spiritual and mystical legends associated with your animal. For instance one of my totems is the crow which is said to know both Divine Law and Human Law, but always weighs situations by Divine Law. While walking through Philadelphia with my crow drawing I looked for such signs. For instance it is perfectly legal by Human Law for rich people to purchase diamonds many suffered to mine, and then to walk past homeless people begging for spare change for supper. Clearly the Science of Love has no legitimate testimony for Human Law. Take notes throughout the entire process of the animal card creations and public deposits. And involve any correspondence with strangers in your poem. **DAY TWO:** Begin your day with a walk around your neighborhood. Notice the animals that surround us. Try to keep a list of them and what they say to you as they cross your path. This can include squirrels, dogs, cats, rats, mice, etc...bugs are animals too, in my opinion. Look for them. Listen to them. Talk to them. Take notes. Use at least 1/3 of these "conversations" in the poem.

CAConrad's (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES

49) **TAKE A (SOMA)TIC BUS RIDE:** *PART ONE:* Take a bus to a city where you have never lived. We took a bus to NYC from Philadelphia. The driver was obnoxious, but we were undeterred. The driver was a terrible driver, tapping the accelerator over and over and over lurching stopping lurching stopping. This is excellent for poetry, these bad bus drivers. Have one foot on the floor, the other hovering an inch above the floor. FEEL the staggering, growling engine through the floor. Look outside. What engines move the world out there? Trees, what does the engine of a tree sound like? Touch the seat in front of you in two-second intervals. Lift your hand to the air in front of you. It is FREE from the vibrations of the bus. HOW is this your life? What does it even mean to ask "HOW is this your life?" How are you FREE and not free? Look around you at the strangers on the bus. You are near people who share planet Earth with you. LOOK AT THEM. What do you have in common with each other? Take notes, take notes, notes notes notes. *PART TWO:* When you get off the bus, you should be hungry. Go get something to eat at a kind of restaurant you've never eaten at before, and order something you've never tasted before. As you eat, say the name once in a while of the dish you've ordered, and think about the sounds of the words along with the taste of the food -- does it match? Are there discrepancies? Take notes on your napkin. Ask the server what they think about the dish -- do they like it, why, why not? Take as many napkins with you as you can so you can write on them throughout the day. Exit the place and ask the first person you see (or who'll answer you) in which direction they think you should walk. You're not worried about going any direction in particular. If they ask what type of destination you want, say "Look, I need some guidance, okay?" Walk a couple of blocks and then ask another person "Left or right or straight ahead?" Do this 7 times. Walk two blocks after the 7th direction -- this is your destination. Take out your napkins and write about what you saw on the way, see now, and how the food feels in your belly. Do this sitting on the ground. Shape all your notes into a poem.