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English Studies in Latin America  
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## Notes on a Kinopoetics

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Thurston is a poet, mover and educator based in Manchester, UK. He has published numerous books and chapbooks of poetry, most recently *Terraces* (Beir Bua, 2022) and *Phrases towards a Kinopoetics* (Contraband, 2020). Shearsman will publish his selected poems *Turning* in 2023. Scott is founding co-editor of open access *Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry* and co-organized the long-running poetry reading series The Other Room in Manchester. Since 2004, he has been developing a 'kinopoetics' integrating dance and poetry which has seen him studying with dancers in Berlin and New York and collaborating with three dancers in the UK. Scott is a Professor in the English department at the University of Salford where he has taught since 2004.

My earliest experiences of the innovative poetry performance scene in London in the 1990s were intensely embodied ones – from the visionary mercuriality of Maggie O’Sullivan, the earthy vitality of Bob Cobbing and the dynamic, break-neck phrasing of poets like Ulli Freer, Adrian Clarke and Robert Sheppard, this work was an intense wake-up call to pursue poetry in a multi-dimensional and multi-sensorial way, as something that could leap off the page in performance, but also dazzle with energy on paper. Such an approach was also key to its politics of undoing normative patterns of language use and the conventions of poetry making.

When I began dancing Gabrielle Roth’s Five Rhythms movement meditation practice in the Summer of 2004, I found that this newly conscious attention to my body in motion resembled my experience of reading and writing this poetry: the feeling of a dynamic experience unfolding in time and space, full of meaning, but also exceeding it at every turn – vivid, alive and thrilling. In the years that followed, I undertook a journey into embodied movement practices including Contact Improvisation, Authentic Movement, Movement Medicine, and The Six Viewpoints, documenting my experiences by means of poetry whilst finding ways of making my poems dance, and enabling my dance to speak. Workshops and correspondences with key artists such as Simone Forti, Clarinda Mac Low, Kenneth King, Sally Silvers and Billie Hanne also enabled seismic shifts in my thinking and performing.

In 2013 I began a series of collaborations with professional dancers (Sarie Mairs Slee, Julia Griffin and Gemma Collard-Stokes) to make performances that used both choreography and poetry, and, in 2014 started working with a Dance Movement Psychotherapist (Vicky Karkou) to explore the role of language and words in movement therapy (this latter project developed into what is now known as Arts for the Blues – an evidence-based creative therapy model for treating depression). I also dived deeply into the literary and cultural history of this conversation between dancers and poets, visiting archives, taking workshops and writing articles, and uncovering a range of insights which shed light on the mysterious and beguiling chemistry between words and movement.

The onset of the pandemic and its restriction on meeting other dancers in the studio threw me back on developing my solo practice, which led to a collaboration with filmmaker Maria

Andrews on two short kinepoetic films – *Terraces* and *Intimacy* – both shot on location in Salford and Manchester in the Autumn of 2021 and edited and released in 2022 (*Terraces* on Pamenar; *Intimacy* and two other related works on soundsRite). Both films draw on a series of live-composed kinepoetic performances out-of-doors and in the studio, reworking a single, embodied poem-dance from the sequence *Terraces* (now published by Beir Bua Press) alongside extemporised text and movement.

*Failsafe* is a new sequence of kinepoetic prose poems, substantial extracts of which have appeared on *Mercurius* and in the *Prototype 4* anthology. I treat all of these texts as fully choreographic i.e. they can be performed as dances.

*Terraces* (8.13): <https://vimeo.com/653878729/39fe053e5f>

*Intimacy* (9.07): <https://vimeo.com/691747144>

from *FAILSAFE*

\*

Invocation of aim in that sequence accusatory of form let loose to live. With softness many undertones come back to watching blood moon. To not shy away from how you will be read in a house. Would just not work without that engagement – I took it as you walked off the deck. To let you move inside the hedge, head out of the window.

\*

Went towards circling around some sort of understanding emerged across a vast gulf waiting for me. Came by and warned you, sort of believed, trusted, indicated the reaction was for you. Lying in the centre of the stone circle, fear of all the challenges above the about.

Just letting go, connecting with a notional sadness at passing of time, incorporated my phrase. Walked out of the circle towards the south-west stone and out to the edge of the summit. Then turned back. Bright ash berries in the centre, crab apples to the west, to the south.

\*

*for Amy Voris*

The feet and the grounding offer articulation; tibia, fibula, malleolus create ankle joint. Talus braces back in the cave, if passing weight, enables leverage down to the ground. Point feet to touch talus, adopt to uneven sentences. Stress is absorbed, to serve the distribution of weight.

In the pre-movement, receiving the mineral body, the dome of the skull. Three types of spine, flight and landing. Pelvis articulates, reaches into space – we are constantly. Grant time to work, take responsibility for your movement – let go in clauses.

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*for Sabine Kussmaul*

Making a little face running out into space when I was a bit stripped of ego. Fluid letting go fell back breathe in three dimensions. Against the wall pressure feedback. Close to breath. Fell in places. When on the floor, sink a shaft – wrap caps in white, as if the hill has received a piece of cloud. Hands that hold, lose sensitivity when touch pressed into service.

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*for Jan Thurston*

Resisting the idea of making things to sell – getting an idea and putting it away. I understood leaving it alone for a time, cutting and reversing part of the pattern – having the idea first, then working out what it was for later.

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