

OUR LOT

Brian Christian

Ovid Now I shall tell you of things that change, new
being
Out of old; since you, O Gods, created
Mutable arts and gifts, give me the voice
To tell the shifting story of the world
From its beginning to the present hour.¹

Abbey Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of
the cancer cell.²

PHASE I

Ostriker I am by myself, climbing into my car,³

Bukowski in the center of the action.⁴

Ostriker The world is flat and happy,
I am in love with asphalt, . . .
I am in love with acres of automobiles.⁵

Alford This world of wonders, where our lot is cast!⁶

Bennett 'Tis true that our lot is but rough.⁷

Kelly & Keil it is essential to extend.⁸

¹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, translated by Horace Gregory, p. 31.

² Edward Abbey, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness (Vox Clamantis in Deserto): Notes from a Secret Journal*, p. 98.

³ Alicia Ostriker, "Mother in Airport Parking Lot," *The Imaginary Lover*, p. 24.

⁴ Charles Bukowski, "in the center of the action," *Bone Palace Ballet*.

⁵ "Mother in Airport Parking Lot," p. 23.

⁶ Henry Alford, "The Land's End," *The Poetical Works*.

⁷ W. C. Bennett, "'Tis True That Our Lot Is but Rough," *Sea Songs*.

⁸ Michael H. Kelly and Frank C. Keil, "The More Things Change . . . : Metamorphoses and Conceptual Structure," *Cognitive Science*, vol. 9 (1985), p. 406.

PHASE II

NAIOP The least expensive way to gain more parking is to restripe an existing lot.⁹

ADA Because restriping is relatively inexpensive, it is readily achievable.¹⁰

Hass Where there was only grey, and brownish grey,
And greyish brown against the white. . .
Now an uncanny flamelike thing, black
and sulphur-yellow.¹¹

Inada The asphalt is wet and shiny from the night
before.¹²

Wright Meanwhile the cars continue[] in a persistent
flow¹³ —

Wenderoth It's amazing how I recognize the parking lot
but do not recognize the parking lot's power to
make customers appear. How is it that this place
remains unfulfilled by its sudden natives?¹⁴

Nietzsche There is nothing better than what is good! and that
is: to have a certain. . . capacity and to use it.¹⁵

Whitlock Given enough space and unimpeded access, it is
comparatively easy. . . These ideal circumstances,
however, are seldom reality.¹⁶

NAIOP A 100-car parking lot can be converted into a

⁹ National Association of Industrial and Office Parks, *Parking for Industrial and Office Parks*, p. 11.

¹⁰ "ADA Design Guide 1 — Restriping Parking Lots." <<http://www.ada.gov/restripe.htm>>

¹¹ Robert Hass, "The Woods in New Jersey," *Sun Under Wood*, p. 30.

¹² Lawson Fusao Inada, *Legends from Camp*, "Loading Feed in the Grange Parking Lot," p. 119.

¹³ C. D. Wright, *Deepstep Come Shining*, p. 3.

¹⁴ Joe Wenderoth, *Letters to Wendy's*, "July 14, 1996."

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §75.

¹⁶ Edward M. Whitlock, P. E. *Parking for Institutions and Special Events*, p. 41.

1,000-car parking garage.¹⁷

In a static development area there might be some question of whether or not the garage would be built, but [here it] is certain the garage will be constructed,¹⁸

ULI thus furthering the principal objective.¹⁹

NAIOP Purchasing or leasing of adjoining land can be a viable alternative.²⁰

A building permit has been obtained for this land²¹

ULI which will assure an adequate supply of parking.²²

NAIOP Future expansion [shall] be horizontal, not vertical.²³

PHASE III

Bell Strange to see people marooned in parking lots.²⁴

Hass The horizontal rush of it, for a moment.²⁵

Robinette The distracting forms of a great number of parked cars makes it difficult to read directional signs, to locate a specific building, or to find entrances, exits

¹⁷ *Parking for Industrial and Office Parks*, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁹ Urban Land Institute, *Parking Requirements for Shopping Centers: Summary Recommendations and Research Study Report*, p. 1.

²⁰ *Parking for Industrial and Office Parks*, p. 11.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²² *Parking Requirements for Shopping Centers*, p. 1.

²³ *Parking for Industrial and Office Parks*, p. 3.

²⁴ Marvin Bell, "Ice," *Iris of Creation*, p. 16.

²⁵ Robert Hass, "Time and Materials," *Time and Materials*, p. 26.

or highways.²⁶

- Whitlock* As institutions grow in proportion to their service populations, they also must change with prevailing trends in the types of services provided. These changes affect parking space needs and parking facility operations.²⁷
- NAIOP* Parking lot users typically do not like to walk more than 300 to 400 feet from where their cars are parked.²⁸
- Robinette* There are, from a landscape design standpoint, a number of things which can and have been done.²⁹
- ULI* Transit alternatives are being considered... a myriad of options ranging from special bus routes to train lines.³⁰
- ULI* Shoplifting, security, lost children, snow removal in some areas, housekeeping, and special events are all problems demanding attention,³¹
offices, cinemas, and food services require additional consideration.³²
- Whitlock* While function is a consideration with all facilities, it assumes more importance in a parking garage than in most building types. Parking structures and lots have unique functional requirements that must be met if the facility is to fulfill its role. That role is not merely to store vehicles, but also to

²⁶ Gary O. Robinette, *Parking Lot Landscape Development*, p. 3.

²⁷ Edward M. Whitlock, P. E. *Parking for Institutions and Special Events*, p. 1.

²⁸ National Association of Industrial and Office Parks, *Parking for Industrial and Office Parks*, p. 11.

²⁹ Gary O. Robinette, *Parking Lot Landscape Development*, p. 2.

³⁰ Urban Land Institute, *Parking Requirements for Shopping Centers: Summary Recommendations and Research Study Report*, p. 96.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

process them and their passengers.³³

Robinette The desire to provide convenience for automobile drivers close to places of dwelling, shopping, work, recreation, education and entertainment causes the design and development of even more space for parking.³⁴

ULI [T]he planning of new centers and expansion of existing centers³⁵

could not have been accomplished without the full cooperation of the shopping center industry.³⁶

Nietzsche And now, after we have long been on our way in this manner, we argonauts of the ideal, with more daring perhaps than is prudent, and have suffered shipwreck and damage often enough, but are, to repeat it, healthier than one likes to permit us, dangerously healthy, ever again healthy — it will seem to us as if, as a reward, we now confronted an as yet undiscovered country whose boundaries nobody has yet surveyed, something beyond all the lands and nooks of the ideal so far, a world so overrich in what is beautiful, strange, questionable, terrible, and divine that our curiosity as well as our craving to possess it has got beside itself — ah, now nothing will sate us anymore!³⁷

³³ Edward M. Whitlock, P.E. *Parking for Institutions and Special Events*, p. 41.

³⁴ Gary O. Robinette, *Parking Lot Landscape Development*, p. 2.

³⁵ Urban Land Institute, *Parking Requirements for Shopping Centers: Summary Recommendations and Research Study Report*, p. 2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §382.

PHASE IV

- NAIOP A “sea of asphalt.”³⁸
- Robinette There is no way for anyone to know how many parking spaces there are.³⁹
- The shopper, worker, tourist and resident face glare, heat[,] confusion[.]⁴⁰
- Hass — pleasant scent of tar in the spring sun —⁴¹
- Robinette fields of gleaming autos, prolific signs, vending machines, phone booths, attendant shelters,⁴²
- Miller crushed metal segments of black cars with chrome[, g]azebos with a glass roof and ringed by⁴³
- Hass a delicate cascade [o]f new green leaves,⁴⁴
- Miller minimalist strips of neon lights bisecting the entire site,⁴⁵
- ULI restaurants and meeting rooms, . . . a private tennis club, . . . major office complexes, . . . hotels, which maintain approximately 95 percent occupancy year round,⁴⁶

³⁸ National Association of Industrial and Office Parks, *Parking for Industrial and Office Parks*, Introduction.

³⁹ Gary O. Robinette, *Parking Lot Landscape Development*, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴¹ Robert Hass, “My Mother’s Nipples,” *Sun Under Wood*, p. 12.

⁴² Gary O. Robinette, *Parking Lot Landscape Development*, p. 2.

⁴³ Catherine G. Miller, *Carscape: A Parking Handbook*, p. 89.

⁴⁴ Robert Hass, “The Woods in New Jersey,” *Sun Under Wood*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ Catherine G. Miller, *Carscape: A Parking Handbook*, p. 108.

⁴⁶ Urban Land Institute, *Parking Requirements for Shopping Centers: Summary Recommendations and Research Study Report*, p. 94.

Gander the fields — wheat, cockleburs, jimson —⁴⁷
roses, sandalum, and ambergris,⁴⁸

the spines of cattle,⁴⁹

Hass small white spiders,⁵⁰

Kelly & Keil lions and birds, fish and streams, trees,
constellations, animals of all sorts, and
even echos [sic].⁵¹

Hass The other name we give this overmuch of
appetite
And beauty unconscious of itself is life.⁵²

EPILOGUE

Miller The public sees parking lots as ugly.⁵³

Nietzsche I myself have sought. . . justification of the
ugliness in this world. I regarded the desire for
beauty and for the persistence of certain forms
as a temporary preservative and recuperative
measure. . .

We call things ugly when we look at them with
the desire of attributing some sense, some new
sense, to what has become senseless:⁵⁴

Lloyd Did Fortune smile propitious on our lot?⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Forrest Gander, "Time and the Hour," *Science & Steepleflower*, p. 3.

⁴⁸ Forrest Gander, "Landscape with a Man Being Killed by a Snake," *Science & Steepleflower*, p. 84.

⁴⁹ Forrest Gander, "Field Guide to Southern Virginia," *Science & Steepleflower*, p. 21.

⁵⁰ Robert Hass, "The Woods in New Jersey," *Sun Under Wood*, p. 30.

⁵¹ Michael H. Kelly and Frank C. Keil, "The More Things Change . . . : Metamorphoses and Conceptual Structure," *Cognitive Science*, vol. 9 (1985), p. 303.

⁵² Robert Hass, "The Woods in New Jersey," *Sun Under Wood*, p. 30.

⁵³ Catherine G. Miller, *Carscape: A Parking Handbook*, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §416.

⁵⁵ Charles Lloyd, *Nugæ Canoraæ*, "SONNET XXXII. TO MISS W—."

- Clark* In something as illusory as fate
Persons on earth once could perceive
If not the reasons why things happen
Then the patterns they happen in,
And perceiving these, make do.⁵⁶
- Robinette* The relevance and universality of the parking
lot problem, within an unlimited context —⁵⁷
- Nietzsche* The process of turning a nature inwards —⁵⁸
- Kelly & Keil* It was possible to predict the patterns of
transformations on the basis of structural
properties of ontological knowledge, which is
knowledge of the basic categories of existence.⁵⁹
- Bukowski* I walked to my car
got in
started it
thinking,⁶⁰
- Logue* just for a moment in the chromium dark,⁶¹
- Bukowski* now what did
you do that for?
that was none of your
business⁶²
- Nietzsche* People naturally seek the picture of life in
that philosophy which makes them the most
cheerful — that is to say, in that philosophy
which gives the highest sense of freedom to
their strongest instinct. This is probably the
case with me.⁶³

⁵⁶ Tom Clark, *Paradise Resisted*, "In the IBM Parking Lot."

⁵⁷ Gary O. Robinette, *Parking Lot Landscape Development*, Preface.

⁵⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §376.

⁵⁹ Michael H. Kelly and Frank C. Keil, "The More Things Change. . . : Metamorphoses and Conceptual Structure," *Cognitive Science*, Volume 9 (1985), p. 403.

⁶⁰ Charles Bukowski, "a strange moment," *War All the Time*.

⁶¹ Christopher Logue, *Kings*, p. 8.

⁶² Charles Bukowski, "a strange moment," *War All the Time*.

⁶³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §418.

Nietzsche [T]he eternal lust of creating[,] the eternal compulsion to destroy... seemed to me to be fundamentally associated with pain, however.⁶⁴

Bukowski but I was smiling

I had altered a bit of
ugliness
into something
else⁶⁵



⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, §416.

⁶⁵ Charles Bukowski, "a strange moment," *War All the Time*.