

l¹ Read:

i² Book:

Dialogue,³ text,⁴ =
in present,⁵ time,⁶ with other,⁷ bodies,⁸ and souls.⁹

*Little by little the book will finish me. [l'espace blanc].*¹⁰

1. The letter l, [...] this vertical line with its two tiny horizontal serifs, is a straw in the mouth of emptiness that blows to limpid a bubble that only a momentary reflection of the light can betray its presence
2. A point like a head cut off its body and become soul again in its fleeting, soapy roundness, only to burst on contact with space
3. Any dialogue is two condemned monologues facing each other
4. A text that never *is*, but is always *becoming*
5. Absence means erasing the written, presence, engraving its scream
6. The present is the time of writing, both obsessed with and cut off from an out-of-time brimming with life
7. Heathcliff is more myself than I am
8. Catherine is tired of being enclosed in this shattered prison of her body, and wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there
9. On the whole, the soul cleaves so tight to the body, like a line of writing cleaves to the one above it and to the one below
10. 'Edmond Jabès and the Question of the Book' [p.65], in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978

I READ:
i BOOK:

Little by little the book will finish me

[*l'espace blanc*]

*First performed at Reading as Art: Turning the Pages of Victorian Psychology, Senate House Library, London, 15 October 2013,
with Catherine Linton as I READ, Madeleine Brolly as i BOOK and Miroslav Pomichal as FOOTNOTE.*

[l'espace blanc]

I READ: I Read

i BOOK: i Book

I READ: Yester-evening I sat in my nook reading some old books till late on towards twelve. It seemed so dismal to go upstairs, with the wild snow blowing outside, and my thoughts continually reverting to the kirkyard and the new-made grave¹

White of the wild snow blowing outside
Little by little the book will finish me

[L'espace blanc]

¹ Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, London: Penguin Group, 1994, p. 154.

- I READ: Where is the way?
- i BOOK: The way is always to be found
- I READ: A white sheet of paper is full of ways
- i BOOK: We will go over the same way ten times, a hundred times²
- I READ: I lose myself in reading³
- i BOOK: Our decision to write, to talk, springs from a lack⁴
- I READ: I want to scream in libraries
- i BOOK: Scream: desire of the book before the book⁵
- I READ: I sigh, slip from my desk
- FOOTNOTE: *Slips*. Strips of vellum used as sewing supports. Often visible on the front covers of vellum bindings
- i BOOK: i Book, wait
- I READ: His hair and clothes were whitened with snow, and his sharp cannibal teeth, revealed by cold and wrath, gleamed through the dark⁶
- White, whitened with snow
- i BOOK: I remembered I was lying in the oak-closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind and the driving of the snow⁷
- I READ: White, the driving of the snow
Little by little the book will finish me
- [*l'espace blanc*]

2 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 69.

3 Edmond Jabès, *The Selected Poems of Edmond Jabès*, tr. by Keith Waldrop, New York: Station Hill Press, 1988, p. 113.

4 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2002, foreword.

5 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, Hanover & London: Wesleyan Press, 1991, p. 101.

6 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 155.

7 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 36.

- I READ: I pass amongst bowed head rows
- i BOOK: The restless soul, the *dybbuk*⁸
- I READ: Am I *dybbuk*?
- i BOOK: Is yours not a restless soul, my dear?
- I READ: I, they slump, spines coiled
- FOOTNOTE: *Spine*. The part of the cover, which wraps over the back of the book
- i BOOK: I show straight backbone
- FOOTNOTE: *Back, backbone*. The edge of a book along which the leaves or sections are fastening together in binding
- I READ: Eyes dipped
- i BOOK: The book has ambition to be the book of the eyes⁹
- I READ: In love with light pads
- i BOOK: I am lamp,¹⁰ I shed light in the West Wing
- FOOTNOTE: *West Wing*. Continued upstairs in Sterling Library Gallery West and the North Gallery overlooking the Paleography Room: Book Studies 095 (Ramsden) to 686 (Zaehnsdorf)
- I READ: Their laps, tug chord plugged to grid ground, sourced
- i BOOK: I am held up, by backing boards, my book bound kin
- FOOTNOTE: *Backing boards*. Wedge-shaped boards, usually of beech. They are angled at the wide ends to assist in making the joint on the spine when backing
- I READ: They pray, read, in both hand clutch
- i BOOK: I hold in my reams
- FOOTNOTE: *Ream*. A quantity of paper: 480 sheets of handmade, 500 sheets of machine made
- I READ: Their dim gaze
- i BOOK: Lifeless mask, where nothing is lifelike, nothing speaks of death¹¹
- I READ: Makes blank faced scan
- i BOOK: The role of the *blanc* in the text¹²
- I READ: While back lit screen glares back
- i BOOK: *Aely*, incarnation of a glance, a look, which is subservient to the law of the book
- I READ: The buzz tablet toy

8 Michelene Wandor, *Guests in the Body*, London: Virago Press, 1986, p. 5.

9 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 113.

10 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 155.

11 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000, p. 15.

12 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. xiii.

- i BOOK: The eye book that contains the world
- I READ: Inhabitant of the elsewhere of the unimaginable elsewhere¹³
- i BOOK: Endlessly folding in upon itself¹⁴
- I READ: Steel book block guards all
- i BOOK: The fragment, the exploded book, is our only access to the infinite¹⁵
- I READ: Keeps text hid, eeks out, each lone page
- i BOOK: Without my texts, I am more anonymous than a bedsheet in the wind, more transparent than a windowpane¹⁶
- I READ: Lone souls, one by one
- i BOOK: When we converse, we live within a society; when we think, we remain alone¹⁷
- I READ: For its pages are so arranged that, once the first is turned, none of the following can avoid the planned facing page
- i BOOK: Thus we manage to deceive our solitude¹⁸
- I READ: Turned on
- i BOOK: Carefully we pick up a book or how gently we open its cover
- I READ: Turned off
- i BOOK: My binding cracks
- I READ: Touch pad
- i BOOK: My pages cling to one another as if afraid to face the light
- I READ: Can't be shut
- i BOOK: My book falls open the moment we part¹⁹
- I READ: Closed
- i BOOK: My cover continually rises up to push away the hand holding it
- I READ: Reading is physical, book makes kiss kiss fold
- i BOOK: And it is violent
- I READ: Moist hand tips grease slide text
- i BOOK: From the first page the book announces itself as a place of pain, suffering, and rupture²⁰

13 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. xvii.

14 Edmond Jabès, *The Selected Poems of Edmond Jabès*, tr. by Keith Waldrop, p. xiv.

15 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 18.

16 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 70.

17 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 68.

18 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, Hanover & London: Wesleyan Paperback, 1988, p. 80.

19 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 14.

20 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, introduction.

- I READ: Make tides of vague waves
- i BOOK: Every word is born of a word's ebb. We speak in tow to the tide²¹
- I READ: Leave grease smudge trails
- i BOOK: Mark the first page of a book with a red ribbon, for the wound is inscribed at its beginning.²²
The story of the book is thus the story of wounds become writing²³
- I READ: The artist's wound, the irritation that causes the pearl
- i BOOK: The original lesion that the artist's work forever tries to repair²⁴
- I READ: I seek, scream into the void, for the felt page
- FOOTNOTE: *Void* and *vocable*. From the Latin *vocare*, to call²⁵
- i BOOK: *Vocable*, the word as it speaks within the silence of the book, not only read, but heard
- I READ: The oral dimension within the written²⁶
- i BOOK: Both eye and ear must read it. Write speech
- I READ: *Vocable* versus the unknown void
- i BOOK: Nothing-ness, *mot* or *morts*²⁷
- I READ: Reading is the becoming aware of a scream
I want to scream in libraries
- i BOOK: The *vocable* is fundamentally subversive, separating itself from the language environment to
find the other writing
- I READ: The white writing, which every text hides as the sea hides the sand²⁸
White of the white writing, white sand
Little by little the book will finish me
- [*l'espace blanc*]

21 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 191.

22 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 69.

23 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. x.

24 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 2.

25 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990, p. 59.

26 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 64.

27 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 75.

28 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. xx.

- I READ: I pine for the pulp page
- i BOOK: The first word is always a word of mourning
- I READ: Give me a pen
- i BOOK: And the point of any pen is that of a cry²⁹
- I READ: I rise, flounce to the stacks
- i BOOK: Come, *dybbuk*, from this point we have conceived the book³⁰
- I READ: I clutch tight my search code, palm guide
- i BOOK: You dream of writing a book. The book is already written³¹
- I READ: Climb soft stair tread, take East Wing
- FOOTNOTE: Sterling Library Gallery East: Paleography Collection CC25.81 and CC25.9 (Codices)
Catalogues of manuscripts by Subject and Author as subject
- i BOOK: All writers want the word to be flesh. The flesh of a bird, so it can take wing
- I READ: Sewn upon an arc of white, an ark of white to bear the poet's thoughts out upon the flood of
immortality
- i BOOK: There is no frigate like a book to carry the soul to survival³²
- I READ: White of an arc of white
Little by little the book will finish me
- [*l'espace blanc*]

29 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. x.

30 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 138.

31 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 129.

32 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, pp. 641-2.

I READ: I pause, gaze down at neat, tap key rows of folk

i BOOK: Now the flesh has become words

I READ: Bent yawn dolls, glazed heads

i BOOK: And the words live among us³³

I READ: I lean, from my wood clad perch

i BOOK: Unlike birds, books die with wings spread open³⁴

I READ: Lie down and shut your eyes: you're wandering. There's a mess! The down is flying about like snow³⁵

White of down, flying like snow
Little by little the book will finish me

[*L'espace blanc*]

33 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 108.

34 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 26.

35 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, pp. 113-4.

- I READ: I tut
- i BOOK: Shhh... big noise about noise being abolished. Silence for nothing
- I READ: My hands clutch, rail against them
- i BOOK: The hand understands only silence, understand only the hand³⁶
- I READ: I turn back, find full fed shelves
- i BOOK: I sense her, *dybbuk*, read her steps
- I READ: Dense stacked, lush bookery
- i BOOK: I swell my spine to catch her eyes
- FOOTNOTE: *Swell*. The additional thickness in the sewn folds of the sections, caused by the sewing thread and any repair paper
- I READ: Nude, buff tombs, stand each to each
- i BOOK: I am forced to dwell
- FOOTNOTE: *Dwell*. The time for which the hot tool is impressed in the leather while gold or blind tooling
- I READ: Corpse blocks dull all noise
- i BOOK: I shout mute, a spine name I know not
- I READ: Books, lull sound, hush
- i BOOK: Send blind tooled signs
- FOOTNOTE: *Blind tooling*. Making a dark impression in leather by impressing either a hot finishing tool into it, or a cold tool that has first been dabbed in printer's ink
- I READ: Dear books, give low throb
- FOOTNOTE: *Vouloir dire*, meaning, to mean, the will to say³⁷
- I READ: Hum, of word signs
- i BOOK: In frustration, man invented the sign
- I READ: I sniff text
- i BOOK: Which, at first, was merely the image of an image
- I READ: Proofs
- i BOOK: The representation of an irrepresentable in search of itself³⁸
- I READ: Am coaxed to drop coat, shed care sacks
- i BOOK: You never lose the book: you lose yourself³⁹

36 Edmond Jabès, *The Selected Poems of Edmond Jabès*, tr. by Keith Waldrop, p. 73.

37 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. xix.

38 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 51.

39 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 113.

I READ: Feel urge to move, weave

i BOOK: A spiderlike sorcery that helped her sew her scattered selves together into a single yarn of pearl

I READ: The Spider holds a Silver Ball
 In unperceived Hands—
 And dancing softly to Himself
 His Yarn of Pearl—unwinds—⁴⁰

White of a woman-white, of amplitude and awe⁴¹
 Little by little the book will finish me

[*l'espace blanc*]

40 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 633.

41 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 586.

- i BOOK: From a little maid into an old maid by peopling her body with spiders and spiderlike presences
- I READ: Her sex must be full of spiderwebs
- i BOOK: Born—Bridled—Shrouded—In a Day⁴²
- I READ: Babies and ghosts
- i BOOK: The colour of the lily's foot
- I READ: The spider's thread
- i BOOK: The tender Daisy's petals
- I READ: The experienced Pearl's tough skin
- White ghosts
- White lilies
- White thread
- White petals
- White skin
- Little by little the book will finish me
- [*L'espace blanc*]

42 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 633.

- i BOOK: The angel in the house
- I READ: Late espoused saint
- i BOOK: Her dutiful chastity
- I READ: Her virgin pallor
- i BOOK: Her marble forehead⁴³
- I READ: I play in the shelves
- i BOOK: *Serafi*, the absent one
- I READ: I was born to write books. I am absent because I am the storyteller. Only the story is real⁴⁴
- i BOOK: Hide *dybbuk*, seek shelter for the self
- I READ: The book is my home. It has always been the home of my words⁴⁵
- i BOOK: Check your slip, incant the code. I seek your read, write touch
- I READ: My Fate's stack. I sense you; send *dewey* signs to my lost soul⁴⁶
- FOOTNOTE: *Sens* (meaning of sense; *sinn* in German) which includes both a supposedly intelligible, rational sense (a signified meaning) and a vehicle dependent on the senses for its expression (the signifier).
Further, in French, *sens* also means direction, to lose meaning is to lose direction, to be lost, to feel that one is in a labyrinth⁴⁷
- i BOOK: Words as mirror, identity seeking
- I READ: Show me all the transformations of the sign. It could be that I find my name among them⁴⁸
[Sighs...]
- i BOOK: Another sigh, close at my ear. I appeared to feel the warm breath of it displacing the sleet-laden wind. I know no living thing in flesh and blood was by; but, as certainly as you perceive the approach to some substantial body in the dark, though it cannot be discerned, so certainly I felt that Cathy was there⁴⁹
- I READ: Oh, Heathcliff, you are showing a poor spirit! Come to the glass, and I'll let you see what you should wish. Do you mark those two lines between your eyes; and those thick brows, that instead of rising arched, sink in the middle; and that couple of black fiends, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly, but lurk glinting under them, like devil's spies⁵⁰
- i BOOK: I look round impotently—I felt her by me—I could *almost* see her, and yet I *could not*!⁵¹
- I READ: I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself⁵²

43 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, pp. 615-6.

44 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 70.

45 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 120.

46 The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) or Dewey Decimal System, is a proprietary library classification system first published by Melvil Dewey in 1876

47 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. xviii.

48 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 67.

49 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 242.

50 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 60.

51 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 242.

52 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 282.

i BOOK: I ought to have sweat blood then, from the anguish of my yearning—for the fervour of my supplications to have but one glimpse! I had not one. She showed herself, as she often was in life, a devil to me!⁵³

I READ: That coldness melted as fast as snow in April, and ere the tiny thing could stammer a word or totter a step, it wielded a despot's scepter in his heart⁵⁴

White of snow in April
Little by little the book will finish me

[*l'espace blanc*]

53 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 242.

54 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 166.

i BOOK: White
 The energy of the white heat

I READ: White
 The loneliness of the polar cold

i BOOK: White
 The radiance of eternity

I READ: White
 The terror of a shroud⁵⁵
 Little by little the book will finish me
 [*l'espace blanc*]

55 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 615.

- I READ: This, then, is a book, and there are more of them⁵⁶
- i BOOK: Last night I was on the threshold of hell. To-day, I am within sight of my heaven. I have my eyes on it: hardly three feet to sever me.⁵⁷
Take care Cathy, be not fooled by book fanfare
- FOOTNOTE: *Fanfare*. A style of binding featuring leafy sprays and interlaces bounded by a single gold line on one side and a double gold line on the other
- I READ: I take my time, run hands, let them ebb and flow over book forms. Books filled, grams per square
- FOOTNOTE: *Grams per square meter*. The standard measurement used for weighing paper and board
- I READ: I tip toe, reach for the tall
- i BOOK: Don't be beguiled by gauffering
- FOOTNOTE: *Gauffering*. Decorating the edges of a book, usually gilded, by using heated finishing tools or rolls which indent small repeat patterns
- I READ: I dip squat for the short
- i BOOK: Chain not to a girdle-book, it door stops dance
- FOOTNOTE: *Girdle-book*. A book with covering material extended at the top to enable it to be hooked to a belt
- I READ: I trace, touch, hands feel fine buckram
- FOOTNOTE: *Buckram*. Strong and expensive book-covering material, made from woven linen or a mixture of linen and cotton
- i BOOK: Be not book blind by gold leaf glint, glare fixed
- FOOTNOTE: *Gold leaf*. An alloy of 22 carats gold and 2 carats silver, beaten by machine to a thinness of 1 to 250,000 of an inch .0000025 centimeters and used for titling and decorating books.
Glaire, glair. A preparation of white of egg or shellac used to fix the gold leaf in tooling and edge gilding
- I READ: I stroke tanned pig⁵⁸
- FOOTNOTE: *Tanning*...
- I READ: Thank you no footnote, I'll skip, in haste
- i BOOK: Touch not fake gold foil spray, bulk pissed in lines, it pawns word lies⁵⁹
- FOOTNOTE: Skip?
- I READ: Skip
I soothe tawn goat⁶⁰

56 Emily Dickinson, *Selected Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by Robert N Linscott, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959, p. 19.

57 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 272.

58 *Tanning*. The preparation of a skin which turns it into leather. Immersion in tanning liquid made from vegetable materials renders it durable and suitable for bookbinding

59 *Gold foil*. Gold (or gold substitute) sprayed electronically onto a plastic, paper or cellophane backing. Used industrially for the titling of mass-produced books and by the craft binder for economical bindings

60 *Tawing*. The preparation of a skin (usually pig or goat) by treating it with a mixture based on aluminium salts, which renders it flexible. An early alternative to tanning

- FOOTNOTE: Skip again, dear reader?
- i BOOK: Poor library style, what hope?
- I READ: Footnote please, if you'd be so kind
- FOOTNOTE: By all means, ahem
Library style. A utility binding developed around the beginning of the twentieth century, when the public library system became widespread. It incorporated innovations and structural differences that give strength and durability, such as sewn-on tapes, reinforced endpapers and a thick leather cover. It normally has a tight back, and its main feature is the French groove⁶¹
- i BOOK: *Livre je suis. Attends, lisez moi!*⁶²
- I READ: I pass the loose-leaf bound, hole punched, slot cut, thong held
- i BOOK: Pass the cord gripped, post ringed, wire coiled, combed, spring clasped⁶³
- I READ: I skip the limp bound,⁶⁴ soft chemise clad, hid, Christ text⁶⁵
- i BOOK: Make a bow, no Moor, *gracias*, to knot laced, punched form *Mudejars*⁶⁶
- I READ: I rush past *Russia*, tanned hide, birch bark oiled, diced⁶⁷
- i BOOK: *Zigzag Turkey to morocco*,⁶⁸ trade bound⁶⁹
- I READ: Treasure cased, blocks slipped in⁷⁰
- i BOOK: Vellum calf skin
- I READ: Hair ripped
- i BOOK: Soaked
- I READ: Limed
- i BOOK: Dried taught⁷¹
- I READ: Acid burned
- i BOOK: Calves tree⁷²
- I READ: All *Yapp* at me⁷³

61 *French groove.* In the library style, the groove down the edge of the spine, between the joint and the board. Its function is to enable the thick leather used in this binding style to fold more easily at the hinge

62 I am Book, wait, read me!

63 *Loose-leaf binding.* A binding made up of single sheets of paper or other material, with or without holes punched or slots cut in the back margins, and held together by thongs, cords, posts, rings, wire spirals, plastic combs, bars or spring mechanisms

64 *Limp bound.* A soft cover, very often with both squares extending over half the thickness of the book, thus enclosing the edges of the pages. Bibles are often limp bound

65 *Chemise.* A protective covering of fabric or soft leather that wraps over the entire binding

66 *Mudejar.* Binding decorated with intricate Islamic style designs featuring interlaces, knots and punch work. Initially practiced by Christianised Moors (*Mudejars*) in fifteenth century Spain

67 *Russia.* Tanned hide treated with birch-bark oil, frequently diced, i.e. incised with intersecting diagonal lines

68 *Turkey.* Type of goatskin, later known as morocco

69 *Trade binding.* Prestige and miscellaneous bookbinding done by commercial firms employing journeymen (qualified binders) and apprentices trained in the craft. Most of the work is done by hand, but some machines are used. Any book pre-nineteenth century that was not bound up to the taste of the purchase, but bound before sale

70 *Treasure binding.* Cases, often made of precious or jeweled metal, that were not an integral part of the binding, but could be passed from text to text, with the text blocks slipped inside

71 *Vellum.* Calfskin (with the hair removed) that has been soaked, limed and dried under tension, not tanned like leather

72 *Tree calf (tree marble).* Calfskin treated with acid to form a design on the covers, resembling the branches of a tree

- i BOOK: *Ça suffit!*⁷⁴
- I READ: *Où êtes-vous? Dites-moi. Lecteur I*⁷⁵
- i BOOK: *Je sais*⁷⁶
- I READ: *Je viens*⁷⁷
- i BOOK: You'll find me somber
- FOOTNOTE: *Sombre*. A style of binding frequently used on devotional works, featuring blind tooling on black leather
- i BOOK: Clad in black.
- I READ: Those deep black eyes! That smile, and ghastly paleness! It appeared to me, not Mr. Heathcliff, but a goblin!⁷⁸
- i BOOK: To make the word visible, that is: black⁷⁹
Lines are the black tracks of death
- I READ: Life grows in white dots on white⁸⁰
- i BOOK: *L'un*, one—white points on black
- I READ: *Nul*, nothing, *nada*—black points on white
- i BOOK: A point drowned in a point⁸¹
- I READ: Soft thaw winds, and warm sunshine and nearly melted snow. Edgar, is there not a south wind, and is not the snow almost gone!
- i BOOK: The snow is quite gone down here, darling, and I see only two white spots on the whole range of moors⁸²
- I READ: White dots on white, white of nearly melted snow, two white spots on the moors
Little by little the book will finish me

[*l'espace blanc*]

73 *Yapp binding*. A form of binding with squares extended to overlap the exposed edges of the paper and cover them completely. Yapp bindings are usually limp with rounded corners, and are used mainly for devotional books (e.g. prayer books)

74 Enough!

75 Where are you? Tell me? I Reader

76 I know

77 I come

78 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 273.

79 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 62.

80 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 16.

81 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 138.

82 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 123.

- i BOOK: From the moment I closed my eyes, she was either outside the window, or sliding back the panels, or entering the room, or even resting her darling head on the same pillow as she did when a child; and I must open my lids to see⁸³
- I READ: I waft white tissue at you
- i BOOK: Close eyes, let hand lead, Braille read
- I READ: Word blind, I brush cloth
- i BOOK: Life has made my spine round
- FOOTNOTE: *Rounding*. Shaping the backbone of the book into a convex shape in preparation for backing
- i BOOK: I have been stab stitched, if not stamped on
- FOOTNOTE: *Stab stitching, stabbing*. Securing a large number of single sheets together by driving metal staples more than half way through the back margins, from both sides
Stamps. Engraved or case dies used to impress decorative motifs
- I READ: Are you thin as bank, or gross as bond, his *frère*?
- FOOTNOTE: *Bank*. A thin writing paper, white or tinted.
Bond. A heavier substance
- i BOOK: Bank. I am cut flush,⁸⁴ hand case made,⁸⁵ with bands, ridge raised at my back⁸⁶
- FOOTNOTE: *Bands*. The cords or thongs on which the sections of a book are sewn
- i BOOK: My cerf slots are held, head and tail by kettle stitch
- FOOTNOTE: *Cerf, kerf*. A slot or cutting sawn into the backs of the sections
Kettle stitch. A catch stitch or knot made at the end of each section to join it to the preceding one. (From the German word *kettein*, to pick up stitches)
- I READ: I care not for bevelled boards,⁸⁷ or blanket stitch⁸⁸
- i BOOK: I've been knocked up, they took a loaded stick
- FOOTNOTE: *Knock up* (US: jog). To tap the sections of sheets at the spine and head so that they lie evenly and squarely.
Loaded stick. A piece of wood 250 by 25 by 25 millimeters, with a piece of lead attached to one end and bound with leather. It is used to beat down the swell in the backs of sections while sewing
- i BOOK: You'll find me laid
- FOOTNOTE: *Laid (paper)*. Handmade paper showing parallel wire marks about 25 millimeters apart in one direction, with close-set wire marks in the other
- i BOOK: I have folds
- I READ: Folio?⁸⁹

83 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 243.

84 *Cut flush*. The cover cut flush with, i.e. the same size as, the sections

85 *Case making*. The operation, done by hand, of joining two boards together with the covering material to make a case

86 *Bands*. If the cords are laid into grooves so that they lie flush with or slightly below the surface of the book, they are referred to as recessed cords. If the cords or thongs are not recessed, they form ridges across the backbone of the book and are referred to as raised bands

87 *Bevelled boards*. Covering boards which are angled at the edges to present a more elegant appearance

88 *Blanket stitching*. A method of sewing in which the thread pierces the side of the sections and is then looped around the back edges

i BOOK: I've been sectioned

I READ: Quire?⁹⁰

i BOOK: No!

I READ: Quarto?⁹¹

i BOOK: Octavo⁹²
I am Book, where is *dybbuk*?

I READ: I am near, I breath in, reach out

i BOOK: *Vous?*

My fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed

I READ: Let me in—let me in!

i BOOK: Who are you?

I READ: Catherine Linton, I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!⁹³

White of a little, ice-cold hand
Little by little the book will finish me

[*l'espace blanc*]

89 *Folio*. 1. A sheet of paper in one of the traditional sizes, folded once to give two leaves. 2. A book made of such sheets, i.e. the largest format possible in that particular size

90 *Quire*. A quantity of paper: 24 sheets of handmade, 25 sheets of machine made

91 *Quarto*. A sheet of paper folded twice to make four leaves

92 *Octavo*. A sheet of paper of any traditional size, folded three times to make a section of eight leaves

93 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, pp. 136-7.

i BOOK: Come in! come in! Cathy, do come. Oh do—once more! Oh! my heart's darling! Hear me *this* time, Catherine, at last!

I READ: My spectre showed a spectre's ordinary caprice: it gave no sign of being; but the snow and wind whirled wildly through

i BOOK: Even reaching my station, and blowing out the light⁹⁴

I READ: White of snow and wind whirled wildly
Little by little the book will finish me

[*L'espace blanc*]

94 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 39.

- i BOOK: Our first joint touch
- FOOTNOTE: *Joint, shoulder.* The right-angled groove formed in the back folds of the sections, into which the cover boards are placed
- I READ: I let skin salt, my own, meet alum
- FOOTNOTE: *Alum.* A salt used to prepare skin for binding, rendering it soft, flexible, and white in colour
- i BOOK: You, as I, shy from the sun. As plain and small as myself
- I READ: When I lost the use of my eyes, it was a comfort to think that there were so few real books that I could easily find one to read me all of them
- i BOOK: *Lecteur, je épouse son*⁹⁵
- I READ: Why is any other book needed?⁹⁶
- i BOOK: You line me
- FOOTNOTE: *Linings.* The two pieces of material, which are used to strengthen the spine
- i BOOK: *Reliure avec moi*⁹⁷
- FOOTNOTE: *Reliure.* French term for a binding
- i BOOK: Fine stitches will join split thoughts seam to seam
- I READ: Our editorial mark is needle's mark⁹⁸
I want your text
- FOOTNOTE: Text (*texte*) cloth, *tissu, texere*, to weave (*tisser*) sewing (*couture*)
- i BOOK: Text and blank space
- I READ: Presence and absence
- i BOOK: The book oscillates between two frontiers of language: lower limit scream
- I READ: Upper limit silence⁹⁹
- i BOOK: Our basting, both
- FOOTNOTE: *Basting.* A type of stitch in sewing (*faufilure*: the *faux*, 'false' in *faufilure*, 'false-stringing' *farfiler*, *fourfiler*, from Latin *fore*, meaning outside. Thus basting is sewing on the outside, which does not bind the textile tightly
- I READ: I do need my space
- i BOOK: The necessary spaces between even the finest stitching¹⁰⁰
- I READ: What are you inking?

95 Reader, I married her

96 Emily Dickinson, *Selected Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by Robert N Linscott, p. 19.

97 Bind with me

98 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, pp. 641-2.

99 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 75.

100 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. xiii

- i BOOK: *Borges*, If he likes a book read to him, wants to hold it in his hand, to caress certain pages, with his fingers
- I READ: As if he wanted to touch the white fire he cannot see.¹⁰¹
Does the book, here, take the place of love?
- i BOOK: The book is an object of love. Love manifests itself in the book by hugging, stroking, biting sentences, words, letters
- I READ: And outside the book, by an unveiled passion for the wounds become writing
- i BOOK: Fertile lesions whose lips we spread open like a vulva to allow the sperm of death in¹⁰²
- I READ: A body to be caressed causes the hand to open
- i BOOK: There is no caress in the clenched fist. Likewise, no pen—the pen half-opens the hand
- I READ: The hand opens to the word
- i BOOK: Opens to distance.¹⁰³
Our first encounter
- I READ: An encounter above all unique because it was a separation
- i BOOK: Encounter *is* separation. Contradicts logic. Breaks the unity of Being. Which resides in the fragile link of the 'is'. By welcoming the other and difference into the source of meaning¹⁰⁴
- I READ: But is it the worn-out body that drags the spirit down into nothingness, or does the spirit, rather, at the height of its power push the cumbersome body into the void?¹⁰⁵
- i BOOK: On the whole, the soul cleaves so tight to the body, like a line of writing cleaves to the one above it and to the one below¹⁰⁶
- I READ: The first manifestation of my existence was that of an absence that carried my name¹⁰⁷

In vapid listlessness I leant my head against the window, and continued spelling over Catherine Earnshaw—Heathcliff—Linton, till my eyes closed
- i BOOK: But they had not rested five minutes when a glare of white letters started from the dark as vivid as spectres—the air swarmed with Catherines¹⁰⁸
- I READ: White, a glare of white letters
Little by little the book will finish me

[l'espace blanc]

101 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 133.

102 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 210.

103 Edmond Jabès, *The Selected Poems of Edmond Jabès*, tr. by Keith Waldrop, p. 75.

104 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 74.

105 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 14.

106 Michelene Wandor, *Guests in the Body*, p. 3.

107 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. xxi.

108 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 32.

- I READ: Heathcliff is more myself than I am, for he has only a single name, while I have so many that I may be said in a sense to have none¹⁰⁹
- i BOOK: Far safer, of a midnight meeting
External ghost,
Than an interior confronting
That whiter host.
- Ourself, behind ourself concealed,
Should startle most;
Assassin, hid in our apartment,
Be horror's least¹¹⁰
- I READ: The other is not me, and not my invention. He is my discovery of the other within me¹¹¹
- He's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire¹¹²
- i BOOK: Forget the text that gave birth to the text
- I READ: I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being!¹¹³
- i BOOK: Forget the text that gave birth to the text
- I READ: We began to write with this forgetting¹¹⁴
- The words of my books line up to put me behind momentary bars
- i BOOK: The page would have been my prison without the virgin spaces—my freedom—which the text labours to safeguard¹¹⁵
- I READ: The Other Side of the Mirror—an enraged prisoner
- i BOOK: Herself. The poem¹¹⁶
- I READ: The front pattern does move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!
Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over. Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard. And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads. They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside down, and makes their eyes white!¹¹⁷
- White of their eyes
Little by little the book will finish me
- l'espace blanc*

109 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 276.

110 Emily Dickinson, *Selected Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by Robert N. Linscott, pp. 149-150.

111 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 5.

112 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 80.

113 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 81.

114 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 51.

115 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 73.

116 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 16.

117 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader: The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Fiction*, ed. by Ann J Lane, London: The Women's Press, 1981, p. 15.

- i BOOK: What is behind or underneath the page works to unsettle what is written on the surface; the wrinkles on the face of the page are but shadows of what transpires beneath its features
- I READ: Within the writing moves a counter writing¹¹⁸
- i BOOK: Women have the power to create themselves as characters, even perhaps the power to reach toward the woman trapped on the other side of the mirror text and help her to climb out¹¹⁹
- I READ: The crystal surface.¹²⁰
If I can accomplish my destiny only as the *Other*, how shall I give up my *Ego*?¹²¹
- i BOOK: Wrought crystal, the infinite regression of figure within figure
- I READ: Writing in diachrony and synchrony
- i BOOK: The same book over and over
- I READ: Book as a series of doors¹²²
- i BOOK: The *I* is the miracle of the *You*¹²³
- I READ: *Je suis livre*¹²⁴
- i BOOK: I follow the book and I am the book
- I READ: I have been this word
- i BOOK: My eyes will be my thoughts, and my hands my road
- I READ: Said the stranger whose voice sounds like mine when I create¹²⁵
- i BOOK: I took you in as word
- I READ: I is the Book¹²⁶
And I am *dybbuk*
- i BOOK: The lost soul. The letter I, this vertical line with its two tiny horizontal serifs, is a straw in the mouth of emptiness which blows so limpid a bubble that only a momentary reflection of the light can betray its presence
- I READ: i. A point like a head cut off its body and become soul again in its floating, soapy roundness, only to burst on contact with space¹²⁷
- i BOOK: The blurring of the creator and the created. Both are I
- I READ: The flesh of her eyes had been succeeded by a dreamy and melancholy softness; they no longer gave the impression of looking at the objects around her: they appeared always to gaze beyond and far beyond—you would have said out of this world¹²⁸
- i BOOK: *L'un. Nul.* One letter dropped from your name, and already you are no more¹²⁹

118 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. x.

119 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 16.

120 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 17.

121 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, pp. 161-2.

122 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 120.

123 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 193.

124 I Book

125 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 107.

126 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 50.

127 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 34.

128 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 140.

129 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, pp. 42-3.

I READ: The day she was buried there came a fall of snow. In the evening I went to the churchyard. It
blew bleak as winter—all round was solitary¹³⁰

White of a fall of snow
Little by little the book will finish me

[*l'espace blanc*]

130 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 242.

- I READ: I'm Nobody! Who are you?¹³¹
- i BOOK: The Unnameable, who is cursed by the inability to speak and the inability to be silent¹³²
The person who has not become anybody is haunted by everybody.¹³³
- I READ: When I state myself, as the representative of the verse—it does not mean—me—but a
supposed person.¹³⁴
Who are you?
- i BOOK: The guardian of the house
- I READ: Are you in the book?
- i BOOK: My place is on the threshold¹³⁵
- I READ: The thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all, I'm tired of being enclosed here.
I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there¹³⁶
- i BOOK: Dare you see a soul at the white heat?
Then crouch within the door¹³⁷
- I READ: To spend the rest of my life in my smallest room with just the door ajar between me and the
forbidding world outside¹³⁸
- White of a soul at white heat
Little by little the book will finish me
- [l'espace blanc]

131 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 587.

132 Edmond Jabès, *The Selected Poems of Edmond Jabès*, tr. by Keith Waldrop, p. xii.

133 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 176.

134 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 583.

135 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 77.

136 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 143.

137 Emily Dickinson, *Selected Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by Robert N. Linscott, p. 120.

138 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, pp. 555-6.

- i BOOK: When we write, do we do nothing while thinking we are doing everything? Only this daily *doing* will count for us.¹³⁹
Je bâtis ma demeure means quite simply, *J'écris*, I write
- I READ: It is the process that constitutes the dwelling. The activity of writing the book that saves the writer
- i BOOK: The straining toward the book that makes it manifest in a share of ink¹⁴⁰
- I READ: Mans quest is to know himself. The books quest?
- i BOOK: To know its process.¹⁴¹
A young disciple asks his master, if you never give me an answer, how shall I know that you are the master and I the disciple? And the master responds: by the order of the questions¹⁴²
- I READ: The book of man is a book of question¹⁴³
- i BOOK: The heart of dialogue beats with questions
- I READ: Blossoming of the book. A text that never is, but is always becoming
- i BOOK: In dynamic process¹⁴⁴
- I READ: Dialogue is an after bloom¹⁴⁵
- i BOOK: We write while words keep moving away¹⁴⁶
- I READ: Dialogue, like the present moment, impossible to hold in its passage from future to past
- i BOOK: We are left with pre- or post-
- I READ: It is another empty center
- i BOOK: Absent like the story
- I READ: The text¹⁴⁷
- i BOOK: The question speaks the very language of lack; it is incomplete speech, a word longing for the missing words that could give it the meaning it has lost or never possessed¹⁴⁸
- I READ: Lack is the vertigo of the book
- i BOOK: The edge of words cannot hope to win out over the abyss¹⁴⁹
- I READ: The abyss – what space was reserved for us in the book blank with the blankness of untouched words?
- i BOOK: Blank is the word for the word being written¹⁵⁰
- I READ: The book is but a space bounded by the word open to words

139 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 16.

140 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 123.

141 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 130.

142 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 35.

143 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 67.

144 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 7.

145 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 23.

146 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 76.

147 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 67.

148 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. xiii.

149 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 37.

150 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 71.

i BOOK: We are not written where the word is written, but engraved where it is erased¹⁵¹

I READ: Whiteness is the mark of an erasure¹⁵²
Little by little the book will finish me

[l' *espace blanc*]

151 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 14.

152 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 9.

- i BOOK: Absence means erasing the written, presence, engraving its scream¹⁵³
- I READ: I want to scream in libraries
- i BOOK: Scream, pure sound, cannot be adequately transcribed onto the written page; it refuses, as it were, its share of ink, and yet it is the very sound of the voiceless book¹⁵⁴
- I READ: Any dialogue is two condemned monologues facing each other
- i BOOK: Who will judge us for this murder?¹⁵⁵
- I READ: Who shall measure the heat and violence of a poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?¹⁵⁶
- i BOOK: Dialogue, our impossible salvation
- I READ: And our madness¹⁵⁷
- i BOOK: No single commentary, no single metaphor becomes central. Question follows upon question, commentary upon commentary, metaphor upon metaphor
- I READ: They are emptied of particularity, are absorbed into whiteness¹⁵⁸
 Little by little the book will finish me
- [*l'espace blanc*]

153 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 45.

154 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 72.

155 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 14.

156 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, pp. 548-9.

157 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 68.

158 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 85.

- I READ: Prose or poetry?
- i BOOK: The novelist is word-deaf. He or she does not know, as does the writer of the book, how to listen to the page and to the reverberations of its whiteness and silence¹⁵⁹
- I READ: They shut me up in Prose—
As when a little Girl
They put me in the Closet—
Because they liked me ‘still’—¹⁶⁰
- i BOOK: It is almost inevitable, that a talented woman would feel more comfortable—that is, less guilty—writing novels than poems
- I READ: The novelist in a sense says they: she works in a third person form even when constructing a first person narrative
- i BOOK: But the poet, even when writing in the third person, says I¹⁶¹
- I READ: I do believe that a writer works with her body
- i BOOK: And the book is above all the book of your body
- I READ: Warm breath—of resurging words—against the cold breath of unsatisfied silence¹⁶²
- i BOOK: Poetry reminds us that words have bodies, that language is, in part, part of the physical world
- I READ: And while the page with its blank space stresses separation, sound connects
- i BOOK: Sound has no borders
- I READ: The Spirit is the Conscious Ear¹⁶³
- i BOOK: In a novel the thread of narration can lead us into an illusion of being part of a seamless world
- I READ: Through the ear, we shall enter the invisibility of things¹⁶⁴
- i BOOK: To abandon oneself to the novels rhythm is momentarily to cease positing the existence of the surrounding world
- I READ: Rhythmicizing consciousness thus emerges as a fascinated consciousness, subject to a fatal horizonless future
- i BOOK: It is in the gap, in separation, in the silence that challenges our existence, that we are human
- I READ: It is in music that we dream of an original unity
- i BOOK: The use of space in the service of consciousness and the magic
- I READ: The music of sound
- i BOOK: This tension establishes its own rhythm
- I READ: Gaps, which avoid the pitfall of fascination

159 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. xix.

160 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 107.

161 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, p. 548.

162 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 81.

163 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 134.

164 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 8.

i BOOK: Blank spaces that are perhaps what holds the books together, what replace the narrative thread.
They let the book show through¹⁶⁵

I READ: The white of the page, white of the gap, of space
Little by little the book will finish me

[*l'espace blanc*]

165 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, pp. 8-9.

- i BOOK: Where is truth but in the burning spaces between one letter and the next?¹⁶⁶
- I READ: Then the linearity of reading is broken
- i BOOK: We are startled awake
- I READ: The smooth horizontal travel of the eye, mind is interrupted
- i BOOK: The connection is broken there is a kind of orchestral meaning that comes about in a leap
- I READ: A vertical dimension vibrating with the energy field between the two lines, phrases, sentences, and perhaps the energy of what would have followed, preceded, but is lacking¹⁶⁷
- i BOOK: As for this distribution of long and short passages, it's a question of rhythm. A full phrase, a lyrical phrase, is something that has great breath, that allows you to breathe very deeply
- I READ: The breathing of discourse¹⁶⁸
- i BOOK: There are other times when the work folds in on itself, and the breath becomes shorter, breathing becomes difficult
- I READ: As you know I suffer from asthma.¹⁶⁹
But that is not the point
- i BOOK: One said: I am a point
- I READ: Ah, one day I should like to discover the circle whose center I must be: my world
- i BOOK: The other said: I am a circle
- I READ: Ah, one day I should like to discover the center which makes sense of the adventure of the line¹⁷⁰
- i BOOK: When God, *Eil*, wanted to reveal Himself, he appeared as a point. A point that in both traditions expands into creation and contracts again to a point at the end of time
- I READ: The real title of the book, is the fine point in red¹⁷¹
- i BOOK: Point. Drop of sperm, the locus where male and female conjoin, the act of conception, of creation¹⁷²
- I READ: Point – naturally inscribed at the top center of each page, as a running head¹⁷³
- i BOOK: Hebrews compared the present to a point, seeing in it both the end of the past and the beginning of the future
- I READ: For the present is comparable to a point in that neither possesses extension, in time, in space
- i BOOK: The present, moreover, is at the middle of things, continually hovering between past and future, it defines the *center* of experience¹⁷⁴
- I READ: There is no present. There is a past haunted by the future and a future tormented by the past

166 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 101.

167 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 21.

168 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 22.

169 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 9.

170 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 148.

171 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 127.

172 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 138.

173 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 136.

174 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 140.

- i BOOK: The present is the time of writing, both obsessed with and cut off from an out-of-time
brimming with life¹⁷⁵
- I READ: Presence is too present to be free, and absence too absent to have the chance¹⁷⁶
- FOOTNOTE: *Ousia* and *parousia* are the Greek words for being governed by presence. *Epekeina tes ousias* is the
Platonic term for the beyond of being¹⁷⁷
- I READ: At the top, the past
- i BOOK: At the bottom, the future
- I READ: At the top there is light
- i BOOK: At the bottom there is light¹⁷⁸
- I READ: White of white page, white above, white below
Little by little the book will finish me
- [l'espace blanc]

175 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 21.

176 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 29.

177 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. xvii.

178 Edmond Jabès, *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 73.

- I READ: Oh, I'm burning! I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! Why am I so changed? Why does my blood rush into a ball of tumult at a few words?¹⁷⁹
- i BOOK: To leave writing is to be there only in order to provide its passageway, to be the diaphanous element of its going forth; everything and nothing¹⁸⁰
- I READ: You have killed me—and thriven on it, I think. How strong you are! How many years do you mean to live after I am gone?¹⁸¹
- i BOOK: The pages of the book are doors. Words go through them, driven by their impatience to regroup, to reach the end of the work, to be again transparent¹⁸²
- I READ: What in the name of all that feels has she to do with *books*, when I am dying?¹⁸³
- i BOOK: Death strolls between letters.¹⁸⁴
Deprived of the air of its r, *la mort*, death, dies asphyxiated in the word, *le mot*¹⁸⁵
- I READ: I wish I could hold you, till we were both dead! I shouldn't care what you suffered. I care nothing for your sufferings. Why shouldn't you suffer? I do! Will you forget me? Will you be happy when I am in the earth?¹⁸⁶
- i BOOK: I let ink run into the body of every letter I guessed, so that it should live and die of its own sap¹⁸⁷
- I READ: Oh, you see, he would not relent a moment to keep my out of the grave. *That* is how I'm loved! Well, never mind. That is not *my* Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me: he's in my soul¹⁸⁸
- This is my letter to the world
That never wrote to me¹⁸⁹
- Black letters in a book of blackness
Little by little the book will finish me
- [l'espace blanc]

179 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 116.

180 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 70.

181 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 141.

182 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 59.

183 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 113.

184 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 71.

185 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 6.

186 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 142.

187 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 35.

188 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 143.

189 Emily Dickinson, *Selected Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by Robert N. Linscott, p. 102.

- i BOOK: Writing a book means joining your voice to the virtual voice of the margins. It means listening to the letters swimming in the ink like twenty-six blind fish before they are born for our eyes.¹⁹⁰
Vowels, as they are written, resemble the mouths of fish out of water pierced by the book. Consonants resemble dispossessed scales. They live uncomfortably in their acts, in their hovels of link. Infinity haunts them¹⁹¹
- I READ: I remember I had my hair down that morning so that it covered my back. Black hair with a soft blue shimmer. My hand passed through it, now like a sturgeon, now like a starfish.¹⁹²
Was it me or *the other embracing me?*¹⁹³
- i BOOK: *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy?
- I READ: I was no longer myself. I was the other or, rather, I finally took her place and was so excited, so grateful to the auspicious hour and the whole world that I lost control and pressed myself to myself so long that I collapsed without a sign of life¹⁹⁴
- i BOOK: I have not one word of comfort. You deserve this. You have killed yourself¹⁹⁵
- I READ: I do not know if I killed me, or if I died on the threshold of an impossible love, on the margins of the book¹⁹⁶
- i BOOK: I forgive what you have done to you. I love *your* murderer—but *mine!* How can I?¹⁹⁷
- I READ: Be with my always—take book form—drive me mad! only *do* not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you!¹⁹⁸
- i BOOK: Oh, God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without your life! I *cannot* live without your soul!¹⁹⁹
- I READ: Laid on his back. His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started; and then he seemed to smile. I could not think him dead; but his face and throat were washed with rain; the bedclothes dripped, and he was perfectly still. The lattice, flapping to and fro, had grazed one hand that rested on the sill; no blood tricked from the broken skin, and when I put my fingers to it, I could doubt no more: he was dead and stark! I hasped the window, I combed his long black hair from his forehead; I tried to close his eyes: to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation before any one else beheld it. They would not shut: they seemed to sneer at my attempts: and his parted lips and sharp white teeth sneered too!²⁰⁰
- Black of his black hair, black of his black eyes
White of his sharp white teeth
Little by little the book will finish me
- [*l'espace blanc*]

190 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 17.

191 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, p. 68.

192 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 109.

193 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 110. Misquotation: Was it me or *the other embracing her?*...

194 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 110. Misquotation: I was no longer myself. I was the other or, rather, I finally took his place and was so excited, so grateful to the auspicious hour and the whole world that I lost control and pressed Yaël to myself so long that she collapsed without a sign of life

195 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 144.

196 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 111. Misquotation: I do not know if I killed you or if you died on the threshold of an impossible love, on the margins of my death

197 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 144. Misquotation: 'I forgive what you have done to me. I love *my* murderer—but *yours!* How can I?'

198 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 148. Misquotation: 'Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! only *do* not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you!'

199 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 148. Misquotation: 'Oh. God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!'

200 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p. 277.

i BOOK: Do you know that the final period of the book is an eye, and without lid?²⁰¹

A hole. An empty socket
 An eye of night
 A shattered eyeball
 And then? You look
 You plunge
 Is this what is called unity
 A circle undone?
 A circular scream²⁰²

I READ: I want to scream in libraries

Half open,
 My hand,
 Indifferent to fatigue.
 The whole sky, along with the language,
 Forces its way
 Into this too tiny place
 Set apart by my pen.
 Someday, breath
 Will fail,
 The hand collapse
 Over imposed-on paper.

Always this image
 Of hand on forehead,
 Of writing restored
 To thought.²⁰³

i BOOK: Though the pen grow weaker and weaker, the book nevertheless continues writing, in white letters, to the end²⁰⁴

I READ: White of white letters
 Little by little the book will finish me

[*l'espace blanc*]

201 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, p. 13.

202 Warren F. Motte, Jr. *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, p. 249.

203 Edmond Jabès, *The Selected Poems of Edmond Jabès*, tr. by Keith Waldrop, pp. 97-99.

204 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 211.

I READ: This dream: a dreadful smothering of the soul, then a lofty idea of death, then an ordinary note pad where the day butts against the night²⁰⁵

Day against night
White and black
White on white

Little by little

the book

will

finish

me

[*l'espace blanc*]

205 Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, p. 99.

FOOTNOTE: But in this kind of true interchange, we pay attention to what is being said with almost melodramatic emotion and at the same time we become more and more immersed in the solitary well of our meditation. This increasing dissociation cannot be sustained in a permanent balance. For this reason, such conversations characteristically reach a point when they suffer a paralysis and lapse into heavy silence. Each speaker is self-absorbed. Simply as a result of thinking, he isn't able to talk. Dialogue has given birth to silence, and the initial social contact has fallen into state of solitude²⁰⁶

206 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2002, p. 68.

The Books

- Brontë, Emily., *Wuthering Heights*, London: Penguin Group, 1994
- Derrida, Jacques., 'Edmond Jabès and the Question of the Book' in *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978
- Dickinson, Emily., *Selected Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by Robert N Linscott, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar, Susan., *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000
- Jabès, Edmond., *From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, Hanover & London: Wesleyan Press, 1991
- Jabès, Edmond., *Jabès: The Book of Dialogue*, tr. by Rosmarie Waldrop, Hanover & London: Wesleyan Paperback, 1988
- Jabès, Edmond., *The Selected Poems of Edmond Jabès*, tr. by Keith Waldrop, New York: Station Hill Press, 1988
- Motte, Warren F. Jr., *Back to Questioning Edmond Jabès*, Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990
- Perkins Gilman, Charlotte., *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader: The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Fiction*, ed. by Ann J Lane, London: The Women's Press, 1981
- Waldrop, Rosmarie., *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2002
- Wandor, Michelene., *Guests in the Body*, London: Virago Press, 1986

With thanks to Sharon Kivland and Mura Ghosh