

## HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS

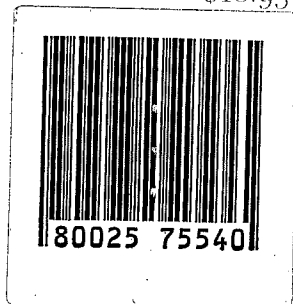
Joan Retallack

Borrowing the title of J. L. Austin's important philosophical tract, Joan Retallack seeks through poetry answers to Austin's questions about the relationship between saying and doing. In five sections, "Ex Post Animo," "Ex Post Facto," "Ex Post Scripto," "Ex Post Logo," and "Ex Post Fix," Retallack explores what poetry means and how poetry intersects with other intellectual forms—charts, drafts, encyclopedias, dictionaries, lexicons, grammars, games, translations and just plain linguistic arpeggios. Like a whirling dervish of linguistic forms, *How to Do Things with Words* stirs up the cobwebs of the brain, encouraging us to find and make new connections with the world around, within, and outside of us.

Author of *Afterrimages*, *Errata Suite*, *Icarus Fffffalling*, and *Circumstantial Evidence*, Joan Retallack teaches at the University of Maryland and is an associate of the Bard Institute for Writing and Thinking. She has published extensively on John Cage, in particular *MUSICAGE: Cage Muses on Words.Art.Music* (Wesleyan University Press), winner of the 1996 America Award.



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HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS • Joan Retallack



SUN & MOON  
CLASSICS

# HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS

## JOAN RETALLACK

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blue-ey'd	ditty	this blue
I presented	then appointed	no hope
fertile	barren place	I
no place	presented	appointed
barren	hope	no hope

the dog	and fertile	this
this blue-ey'd hag	the ditty	the ditty does
this	then appointed	-ey'd
of virtue	blue	hope
the ditty does	fertile	hag

## LOCAL TRAVELLING

## EXCURSIONS

## SIGHT-SEEING

anderfligge strife-loosed tüber

check point for diacritical marks

Unkraut verdirbt nicht  
Schlaf und Tod, usw.

¿Hay ópera?

Unkraut Schmerzen-schreiben

Quiero escribir unas postales.

(here we arrive at the scene of the translators' tramp in the woodland)

*No tengo nada que declarar.*

↑ na ' - THa ↑

I ke an-dar'

little killer bee  
no com-para-bl-eng-licks-ex-  
prex-ion

" " " " " " " " " "

## LOCAL TRAVELLING

## EXCURSIONS

## SIGHT-SEEING

it would seem to be a sort of  
unc conditional hypothermal  
of accident untranslatable  
it would seem to be a sort of

of accident if it turned out  
das that ein an una an un  
situation unos niños (in which)  
the forza del etcetera, etc.

Nacht-Tragiker (would) fit

a thing das Ding a ling  
pebbles fall-ing l'ink Kiesel-stein

that the das ding the sound  
of flies buzzing (dying like flies)

---

Y unas moscas se les metían entre los sacos/y se volvían a  
salir/y se les sentaban en/on the heads of the children i.e.,  
e.g. (in which) (wherein) all under severe lyrical stress

---



**because** you want to cry out **because** (scream)(shout)(shriek)  
and tear **because**  
out (extract) the words (eyes) from this page **because** you see  
the/y don't see the  
**because** the/m that have become only **because** eternal the  
**because** of that **because**  
the/y are the the **because** the the whose only noun exists only  
in order to **because** exists only  
in the economical **because because** the the only must be

(f)Fact: we derive the conditional of our future  
(f)rom the hypothetical of our past

The Paradox of Reference: On Floating Bodies

Errata for *STROMATA* by David Miller:  
p.26: for "group" read "groups"  
p.54: insert semi-colon after "atrocities"

M OUR NINGBE CAUSE ELEC TRICK CITY  
OAS PER GÈS NACHT AS PÉRITÉ Y LOSS  
NIÑOS MO URNING BECAUSE EL ECTRICK  
CIT YO AS PERGÈS NACHT AS PÉR ITÉ (Y)  
LOSSNIÑOS MOURN IN GBE CAUSEEL ECT  
RICK CITY O AS PER G ÈSNACHT ASP É RITÉ  
YLOSS NIÑOS MOUR NI NGBE CAUSE ELECT  
RICK CIT YO ASPERGÈSNACHT ASPÉRITÉY  
LOSS NIÑOS MOURNING BECAUSE EL

[ERRATA-UM: THE EDITORS APOLOGIZE  
FOR T'ERRORS IN TRANSLATION]

*Izubuchi says Pound's poems*

*are inadvertent Rengas*

goat-foot choros the

not a ray  
not a  
spare disc  
pale foot  
this is the first time

(direct quotation of passage)

when the fisherman hesitates

he might

be deceived

doubt is immortal

sunlight

compared with

not complete sense  
no deceit in heaven  
which enables the wearer  
point of contact  
act of forgiveness

again

after  
an attempt  
consolation  
divine comedy  
neither feather nor flame  
which is actually  
a holy mountain in Buddhism  
tree connects heaven & earth  
oak olive katura

life)

(to summarize Pound's whole

inspiteof  
hear the wind speak  
a pretty look in her eyes  
at the mercy of the wind blow

ing

post-humous

pine spruce  
eternal voice  
a corona of angels  
a drama in which:

/he/

suddenly recalled Buddhist rule  
abstain from drinking

/to/

/he/

declines the drink from  
wedding cup

/the/

/to/

join the two traditions

/to/get/her/

---

Dante met Beatrice  
(bitter memory discarded)  
though his body remained on the earth  
& wept in the rain

WESTERN CIV CONT'D

: A BRIEF EXPERIMENT IN LINGUISTICS:

.....

.....

(please provide sign interpreter for performance)



**Position 6:** Throw head back, open arms wide:

<i>old</i>	<i>Celtic</i>	<i>word</i>	<i>rain</i>	<i>cuts</i>	<i>through</i>
bald	bug	coot	dudgeon	lass	pug
bat	bump	cub	fun	loop	rub
boggle	cabin	Culdee	gag	lubber	shog
bots	char	curd	gown	mug	skip
brag	chert	cut	gyves	noggin	taper
bran	clock	dad	jag	nook	whin
brat	cob	dandruff	knag	pilchard	
brill	cobble	darn	lad	pony	
brisk	cock	drudge	lag	puck	

**Position 7:** Lift left leg knee first, foot dangling, glance over left shoulder:

The Four Color Theory of Mapping

to (*COUCH*) I am not the (*DOLLAR*) person (*ROBOT*) you think (*PISTOL*) you don't know fearful asymmetry beginning with wage "I" diatonic "we." (I like ((comic section)) ascending the chromatic scale w/ the flies. I do.)

Therefore we.):

*arbot tol ouch age tonic miction*

not yet subject to mathematical proof