

# Yellow Papers

## Speaking Out Loud 1

A series of singular events formed by raising a voice, alone or with others, for the sake of a possibility coming into existence and being heard. Starting with the contention that there is no strictly political language or domain, *Speaking Out Loud* embraces language as a single field in which sense and sound are in contact and where philosophical prose and poetry remain internal to each other. Charged with the ethos of an inseparability of form and content, intellect and love, these events turn upon and make free use of the figure of the poet-philosopher— itinerant and found outside the walls of the academy, anyone whomsoever can be it.



## **Nearness**

Yve Lomax

16-5-19

35 minute spoken performance that is attentive to the song of language as it develops a vision of demand, coming to see it not only in life but also potentiality and use, and contrary to the rule of economy.



## Part 1

*Life gives... form to whoever refuses to live  
besides themselves...* (The Invisible Committee, 2017)

‘Everything’, that’s what they say.

‘Everything’, that is what is said.

‘Everything’, they say that, but I’m not sure exactly who they are.

Everything.

‘Everything in this world is designed to distract us from what is there, very close.’

They are sure of it.

And I’m sure that what is asked for is nothing short of a vision: to see, to not be distracted from seeing, to see what is near, what is close, and even closer.

At that moment, I’m looking for what, but I know in my heart that something more is being asked of me—it’s to have a vision of nearness.

And the vision that is coming to me, and I could be anyone whomsoever, is of a nearness that no measure can capture: a nearness that

thwarts any accountability brought to it: a nearness more far reaching than any spatial or geographic idea of it: a nearness that is not contained by a world or society composed of individual entities (who may or may not love their neighbours as themselves).

But I rush ahead.

Let me begin again.

A few years ago a comma was inserted to form the title for a celebratory event, and little did I know then how much would be and could be decided upon by the nearness that this comma, this smallest of marks, presented to me as its insertion brought about the simplest of a syntagm.

—translation, friendship.

Immediately I could see that the comma is unlike the conjunction ‘and’, which separates as it conjoins; I could also see that it doesn’t secretly take over the place and work of the copula ‘is’ that arranges sentences according to (first) a subject and (second) what is said of it. What the comma does do is to bring those two words, call them nouns or terms, and indeed

the matter of each, near to each other, close and even closer.

—translation, friendship.

For sure, upon first encountering these words it appears that with the insertion of the comma one word simply follows another, which is precisely what makes a syntagm. But I read the words again, and yet again, and things begin to loose fixity: what follows—friendship—could just as well come before. This is how I saw it: the comma, far from settling a sequence, capacitates what comes first and what comes after to freely circulate. And loosing fixity and a distinct position, the one and the other begin to fall together, pass through each other; that is to say, to be found amid each other. And what asks for my attention here, to be acknowledged and greeted, is a nearness irreducible to any spatial idea of it.

A comma was inserted to form a title for a celebratory event, and with it something was coming to me and calling for an aptitude akin to clairvoyance: to become a seer.

I see it now, but not then.

The clairvoyance asked of me is to see that the comma in the middle of ‘translation,

friendship' is the taking place of a demand.

I see it now: nearness is the demand.

For one night, and who knows how much longer, the demand is for translation and friendship to be smack in the middle of each other and forming what can only be called an excessive nearness.

It is a vision of nearness, yet it is also a vision of demand.

And what is coming to me to be seen is demand playing in the middle.

It is about to change everything.

Demand is playing in the middle yet is not constrained by sides. Demand is playing in the middle of friendship, playing in the middle of translation, and what is happening is that through demand both are found in the middle of each other and falling into each other—and that's a destitution of, an undoing of, sides.

It is a vision of nearness.

It is also a vision of demand, and what it is showing me is demand playing in the middle and bringing a sweet impossibility: there is no way that I can separate off a demanding subject ranked as first and coming before whatever is demanded. And this shows me that demand is neither the order of a command

nor the duty of an obligation or the must of an imperative. What's more, this demand doesn't make me the consumer who, manipulated and impelled, is to be supplied with what it desires.

Nearness is a demand.

And in many respects it couldn't be any other way, for demand, playing in the middle, brings to the world a nearness, unbridled.

Perhaps I'm rushing.

Let me start yet again.

Proximity is what is at stake in language, and it starts with a demand. A demand for the word not to distance us from things but to keep them close, even closer.

From where has this demand come?

Perhaps I have dreamt it up in the ill-defined time just before sunrise when it's not quite night, not quite morning. But if I have that is no matter. No matter for the demand still demands.

Let's say that something demands something, but the former something does not logically imply or entail the latter something nor force it to exist. Here it is: *what a demand demands is not the reality but the possibility of something.*

Possibility is the object (and perhaps subject) of demand.

The world demands its possibilities. The existences that make the world, sky included, demand their possibilities. Existence demands its own possibility; better yet: existence is a demand for possibility.

It changes everything.

The world demands to be possible.

And it means that the being of the world is not exhausted in the reality of factual existence. Whatever comes to exist, however it be named, never simply is; for, in the middle of it, there is a demand, a demand for possibility. When all is said and done, amid the tears of the world, demand gives back possibility to what 'has been'.

At this very moment demand is found messing up the distinction between existence and possibility. With existence (you, me and much more besides) coming as a demand means that demand is not only playing the middle of existence but also in the middle of possibility. No real boundary can be drawn between existence and possibility—I truly can't say which comes first and what follows after.

Existence, possibility: existence is passing

through possibility and possibility is passing through existence.

Yet again I come to an unbridled nearness. It's a nearness that exceeds the nearness of the neighbour whom you are to love as yourself but is presupposed to be separate and, precisely because of that, so often results in the contrariwise of the tightening of borders and the forcing of hatred.

This much I can say: love doesn't bring individuals into relation. Rather, it makes things be part of each other, be in the middle of each other no matter the number or geographic distance. And just as these words are said there comes again the demand for language to not distance us from things but to keep them close, and even closer. It is a demand for nearness; it is also a demand for possibility.

The world demands its possibilities; or, let us say, being demands its modes and life demands its forms. These modes and these forms are existences yet they arise as possibilities.

Being and life are never found outside of their modes and forms; for, demanding to be possible, they come about constituting themselves only in the middle of the demand, only in the middle of those modifications

and formations. Look but you'll never find an external agent. And look again and you'll see the modes and forms that are possibilities demanding their world.

Language is such a mode.

And so too is my face.

And your face.

And smack in the middle of it is a demand.

Let me put it this way: there is a nature in the world and all the human faces in the world are modes of it. It is a common nature, a common being and it can be called human nature or, say, human being. Each mode, each singular and particular human face, each factual and nameable existence, your face and my face—just look at our faces—is a possibility of that nature or being, and even if this human face is kept out of sight, forbidden to be seen or hiding from identification, the demand that it is remains unforgettable.

Your face: it is an existence, a factual reality; yet it is also a possibility.

And something else is happening in the middle of your face, and it changes a distinction that has, at times, produced not only conundrums of a philosophical kind but also heart-breaking exclusions, expulsions, persecutions and killings.

Here it is: the human faces that are modes of a nature called human bear both the identity and difference of this very nature. They are the same and they are also other. With each possibility, each singular face, each particular mode, identity and difference fall into one and other and become excessively near to each other. Yet again, the one and the other are to be found only in the middle of each other.

Each face is a modification—formation and proliferation—of a nature or being that habit has us calling human, and the demand in each and every modification not only has identity and difference not opposite to each other but also makes every modification immeasurably near to each other. The faces may not look at all alike or are even long forgotten but what is to be had with each mode, each singular face, is the experience of nearness and something I can call continuity. It is an experience of being inside, in the middle and in touch; but so much has been designed to distance us from this experience and no more so than those smart screens before which we put our faces and see ourselves as entities, see ourselves from the outside.

## Part 2

*Here is the time / for the sayable / here is its home.* (Rainer Maria Rilke, 1922.)

The world demands its possibilities, being demands its modes, life demands its forms—language, human faces, animal and flower faces and the luminous blue of the dragonfly skittering across the pond—yet it is perfectly true that no demanding subject or nature (human or otherwise) can be presupposed or separated off.

And it is truly no surprise to me that the world demands its possibility in and as language; that is to say, demands its ‘sayability’.

And straightaway I have to say that this possibility, this sayability, is not a matter of a greater perfection of the things said about something such as the apple is red, is red and green, is dark green or pale green or golden yellow. On the one hand, a something to which language forges a link (referring, representing)

and on the other hand the something or other that is said about it; but sayability is contrary to such separation; it is the utter nearness of world and language. And be sure of it, with sayability nothing whatsoever is left behind or remains in some separate realm.

To see the world's sayability, give attention to 'being the said name'. Say the name 'dust' and give attention to 'being the said dust'. Sayability: the dust of the world in so far as being named dust, being the said name.

Dust.

Here is the name as it is naming (I quietly say *dust*) and here is dust, the dust of the world that truly is 'whatever' as it begins, as it can appear, arise, become knowable—yes, sayable—in being named, as being named by the name dust.

As: it is the proper place of mode.

And keeping our attention firmly on as, for once not being distracted, what there is to see and experience is the world in the middle of language and language in the middle of the world.

Close and even closer.

As—I'll say that *as* is the threshold of a demand for nearness, unbridled, immeasurable and irreducible to any spatial idea of it.

For sure, this demand and this nearness has no recourse to a subject, power, cause or higher being that is external to the process, but it is like being touched lightly to be given something in your hand that, you know in your heart, so much can turn upon.

Pivotal.

Say political.

But that could be too much to say.

Let me begin yet again.

To see what is near to you, to perceive the nearness, is not at all restricted by geographical distance or what is thought past; it is to see the modes and modalities that you are and the nearness that each and every one brings, be it your face or the word just said and what is born with it. It is to know—or at least to have an inkling of—*how* and *what* you are in the middle of, which is to be apprehending and comprehending and experiencing from the inside. But time and time again, we are forced willy-nilly, perhaps even by ourselves, to see ourselves from the outside, and this is where the distancing and distraction begins.

Each and every time we take ourselves to be an entity—be it called individual or society—we become distracted from seeing nearness. And each time we see ourselves from the exterior for that is how entities are seen; but truth is that we are, you and me, possibilities and existences in the middle of each other—and we would not love or grieve if this were not the case.

What I'm in middle of, *what surrounds me*, is also in the middle of me.

I can't say it loud enough.

We are nothing other than a demand, and don't let you parent tell you otherwise.

I can't say it loud enough.

Contrary to all the forms filled out with a date of the birth, name and address my existence never simply is and never will be a fact; it is a demand that makes me a possibility, a being of potential, a being not exhausted by factual existence and that is to be—everyone included—a *fulfilment that is insufficient*.

I'm not an entity, but I'm a mode with which identity and difference, possibility and reality, are found only in the middle of each other.

Nearness.

Nearness is a demand and, yes, in many respects it couldn't be any other way, for the

process of demand brings to the world an unbridled nearness. And in the middle of this nearness there is no language and the world, no myself and the world, no myself and others, for this is a nearness not constrained by a world composed of individual entities; it is a nearness that no measure can capture, a nearness more far reaching than any spatial or geographic idea of it, a nearness that messes with oppositions and antinomies and with which I can experience continuity between the modalities and existences that constitute me and of which I am in the middle—and although the luminous blue skittering across the pond called dragonfly maybe far away it is not distant from me.

*Every fulfilment is insufficient*, which again is to say that with demand the being of the world is not exhausted by factual existence.

Demand gives back possibility to what ‘has been’.

Thinking can do this.

Thinking isn’t about forming an opinion on what ‘is’; rather, it perceives the demand in what comes to be and goes towards the insufficiency of its fulfilment and thinks its possibility. That’s to say, it enables factual

existence, what ‘has already been’, to become possible again.

Through demand the being of the world is not exhausted by factual existence: for everything that has been and everything that has been forgotten, and which no archive on earth can store or have remembered, there remains the sheer possibility. With demand in the middle of each of us, all of this forgotten and all of this possibility remain excessively near and, hence, unforgettable.

Demand—at least the vision of it brought to me—is nothing but faithful to that which having been forever forgotten remains unfulfilled and demands to remain as somehow possible, which again is to say unforgettable. The luminosity of that blue, along with ‘dragonfly’ uttered by language as something purely sayable, shows us, if we are not distracted, the unforgettable that is demand.

It wipes away my tears.

I can demand.

I can.

I can demand nearness. I can demand, but

what never takes place is an action imputable to the will of something called a subject. That I can demand is to be capable, and capability is nothing other than potentiality—*being* potential. I can demand but I don't stand over this demand nor the 'can' and capacity and potential that it expresses.

Can't say it enough.

There is no subject that can be presupposed, taken as already being there and governing 'its' will, for good or bad.

The luminous blue of the dragonfly skittering across the pond, human faces, and other faces besides, and *dust* as sayable in language—the world demands its possibilities and life demands its modes, and with such demand there comes intimacy.

Intimacy.

It is life inseparable from its forms, being inseparable from its modes—yet this intimacy is thoroughly without relation.

Intimacy without relation.

Relation posits its elements—this or that—by taking them, together, as unrelated; but 'without relation' means a remarkable nearness: the nearness that indefatigably undoes sides and collapses oppositions.

Intimacy is the nearness where the world is never separated from its possibilities, its potential; it is also the nearness where identity and difference, the one and the other, coincide—that's to say, fall together.

Intimacy: thinking can experience it.

Thinking perceives the demand in what comes as possibility, and thinking itself is also a demand. The world—life—demands a potential—that is, a possibility—to think. Yes, in thinking, the experience of potentially is to be had, and it is not the prerogative of a few.

The world demands its possibility as thought, and for now lets call this its intelligibility. Yet, lets be clear, this isn't thinking referring to the world, representing or procuring, securing or pronouncing knowledge of it; rather, intelligibility is world and thinking, life and thinking, in contact, intimate and without relation.

Thinking like this, thinking as this, thought prevents any dissociation of life from its form, being from its mode. And it isn't too much to say that it is political, and profoundly so.

### Part 3

*With the wolves of the market place / I refuse to howl.* (Marina Tsvetaeva, 1938.)

Potential is not matter of ownership, it does not belong to a subject who decides at their will to put into action—but it is already, always already, in use.

You are an insufficient fulfilment and, no matter how named, a being of potential in the middle of which, and nowhere else than in the middle, potentiality is *in use* in as much as life is *in use*. But this use bears no resemblance to the model of use found in the modern meaning of ‘to utilise’. What features within that model is an object that is put into use and utilized through the actions of an independent subject, and without any reciprocity at all; however, with the potential and life that is right now in use, a subject that uses and an object that is used do not at all feature with independent clarity, if indeed it can be said that they feature at all.

Wings luminous blue and almost translucent fast going across the pond, your eyes seeing and the dog taking pleasure in barking at the end of the street. Yes, in use, your eyes fell in love with vision, your wings with flying and your voice with loud sounds of vocalisation.

And what is seen by your eyes loving seeing is also 'in use' and no matter the distance, no matter how barely seen, is immeasurably near. Seeing and seen fall together—and here comes the experience of seeing/being seen from the inside. And if we were to make mention of a subject as the one who sees and the object as that which is seen, it would have to be said and emphasised that a seeing subject and a seen object are only constituted in the middle of use. And there in the middle so-called subject and object truly have no independent clarity. A philosopher once said: they are indeterminate. I'll say: excessively near.

Here you are. And what materialises with you is your most intimate potentiality; that's to say, all the possibilities that are implied here and intensely near to you as they are near to each other. Yes, although an insufficient fulfilment (always), what materialises with you, through implication and not actualisation, is

the density of all your possibilities; it is the very the matter of demand.

What materialises with you is your most intimate potentiality, the very matter of demand.

Potential is not waiting to happen by an act of will or some other means. Potential is already in use in the modes and forms of life and it is in the middle of use that life comes about constituting itself in your eyes, your wings, your thinking and your voice shouting at the end of the street. And what remains in the middle of this use and remains still even after your eyes have been forgotten, and your voice has become long silent, is demand.

Demand and use—non-utilitarian and bearing no economic or moral injunction—are dear to each other and dear to both is the messing up of, the cancellation of, distinctions and oppositions, not only of subject and object but also materiality and immateriality, existence and non-existence, identity and difference. And what keeps coming is a nearness more far reaching than any spatial or geographic idea of it, *something like a passage without spatial movement, something like a crossing without distance.*

Yes, the nearness that keeps coming to me doesn't make space a container; or, if there is to

be talk of a container it has to be said that this nearness demands—demand *demands*—that container and contained are only found in the middle of each other.

It changes everything.

And yet again I say: I can demand—this is my intimate potentiality.

I can demand nearness.

I can.

I can even if this potentiality has to bear its impotentiality akin to love bearing the unbearable.

The immeasurable nearness that as mode, as face, as language and so much more, I find myself in the middle of neither needs nor lacks economy.

Economy begins in the instance that we are wrenched from and detached from what is near and cease to and perhaps never even start to apprehend, comprehend and experience from in the middle—where existence and possibilities, being and modes, fall together and entities do not exist. And economy begins in that instance for with the detachment and

separation there comes ‘needs’.

Or to put this the other way around: *needs were what economy gave to human beings in return for the world it took away.*

‘Needs’ have been nothing but produced from splitting the world apart. And with that separation, economy—here comes economic thought—gets us perceiving and believing in the world externally; it is there and then that measurement can go to work; it is there and then that the entities of the individual and society are shaped and economic thought bounces back and forth between the two.

I’m sure of it: economy measures me, evaluates me and equates me as an entity, and it is happy, more than happy, if I do this daily to myself. And now look at those giants that some call the merchants of the infrastructure; they don’t walk the earth but nonetheless are to be found any time of day and almost everywhere engaging us, holding us and sticking us, through so many screens and thriving on the detachment that makes us not only see ourselves from the outside but also ever more needy, evermore needing of this and that, evermore needing of connectivity, evermore needing of ‘being someone’.

It was a comma inserted to form the title of a celebratory event that demanded my attention. For sure, I didn't know then of what I would be a seer. I didn't know then what could be named by the immeasurable nearness that demanded my vision and love. Now it comes to me: what can be named is communism; for what communism names is that which is without economy.

Communism is the proper name for that which takes place without economic definition.

Communism is economy *as not*.

Communism is not an entity to which I belong and give up myself. It is each of our faces being excessively near to each other; it is language and world found only in the middle of each other; it is apprehending things from the inside; and it is the dragonfly far away yet not distant from me.

The demand for nearness lets me name communism, but again I'll say that demand never originates from a place that is already in place; in a sense, it is in the hands of no one even if the demand for nearness is like being touched lightly to be given something in your hand that you know in heart so much can turn upon.



## Coda

Distant music has come close. In a room, in which there are quite a few people, a rhythm has flown through an open window next to which a figure is swaying. I'll say it is a woman and for now say no more than that. And as the rhythm intensifies she dances. Look at how she dances! She can dance. She can. And with this dancing what materialises is the completion of her ability to dance—*she can do it*—and, at the very same time, her potential to dance as potential. And this figure—dancing—shows us the nearness of life and potentiality in use, that we are nowhere else than in the middle of it and, with it, our lives never become a trial.

The dancing that is now filling the room, and making it bigger than any room I've ever known, is showing us, as walls collapse and distinctions fall together, that the life that has potentiality in use and intimately dancing within it, has no recourse to—is simply *as not*—a subject, let alone a will, that precedes and is answerable to and accountable for the action or 'work' that comes to take place.

And what I experience and is there for whomsoever to experience—and this extends to all modes and forms—is a life and an intimate potentiality that remains, no matter how loud the music, quietly and remarkably unjudgable.





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