

V: 29"

to him a name is conceived, that floater  
in the ancient  
ocean

8"

*the whale* (2020), score detail.

**Lauren Redhead**  
the whale: Creative Textual Practices

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## 300 Word Statement

This output defines 'Creative Textual Practice' as a descriptive theme for my compositional work and situates this in a contemporary and interdisciplinary artistic and critical context. It does so through the re-imagining of a medieval poem and further demonstrates how Creative Textual Practices can be employed as a method of articulation for practice research.

In this portfolio, I explore the ways in which material processes and 'Creative Textual Practices' in contemporary music and art both influence aspects of my compositional practice and can be used as frameworks to discuss the research undertaken through this compositional work. In identifying 'Creative Textual Practices' as strategies for composition, I describe the use of text, language and speech as both structuring and performative materials, and the ways that such Creative Textual Practices highlight the performative properties of text within my work. Julia Kristeva describes the semiotic-material meaning-making process, 'productive violence', (1984, 16) of working with text in this way. Through an exploration of the Creative Textual Practices of other artists, contained within the commentary portion of the work, I identify how contemporary artists employ text to embrace the familiar, unfamiliar, and uncanny, by intertwining the symbolic and semiotic aspects of written and spoken textual communication, described by art theorist Estelle Barrett as the 'hyper-differentiated realm of latent and possible values and meanings' in the work. (2011, 19) This context and framing is used to contextualise my composition *the whale* (2020) both within this theoretical and artistic discussion, and within the development of Creative Textual Practices within my personal creative work. Finally, the practices and processes defined through my exploration of 'Creative Textual Practice' are here directed towards reflection on, and articulation of, the research aspects of the project and the idea of 'writing' through a performance lecture.

1:10"	I wish to reveal a song about a certain kind of fish	4"

11:27"	concerning the great whale	3"

*the whale* (2020), score detail.

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Estelle Barrett, *Kristeva Reframed*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011) Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984)

# Summary and Research Questions

The Whale is an allegorical poem in Old English, concerning the potential for the reader to unwittingly fall into sin. Read literally, it concerns the mistaking of a whale, by sailors, for an island. The fragments of the poem in my piece focus on the whale's treatment; on the indignity of having a tent pitched on one's back and then being set on fire, before finally protesting. Musically, this piece also focuses on what cannot be seen: the part of the whale that is there, but under the water; the places that are known to the whale but are unknown to the reader or listener. The materials for the piece comprise a graphic score outlining the structure and text of the piece, and images that are derived from medieval manuscripts that depict whales, as well as a set of recorded fragments that are made entirely from my reading and speaking the fragments of the poem that appear in the score and the performance. The piece should not be considered as a setting of the text of The Whale, but rather a reflection on its materials as the sailors might reflect on the image of the whale under the water.

In addition, this piece draws into focus an aspect of my compositional practice that can be identified in my

compositional work since 2013, but that I have not previously made the focus of my practice research investigations: the use of text, speech and language as material parts of the music. The compositional practices of working with these materials are here given focus by drawing together all of the ways that these materials are used in my compositional work: through the use of a poem as a source text, through using collage to derive concrete and sound poetry, through audio fragments that use text, and through notation that uses text fragments to derive its shape. All of these practices are here defined as 'Creative Textual Practices', after Julia Kristeva, and in this project I give definition to the meaning of this term both for my own practice and for music composition more broadly.

This is explored through the creation of a work that has been realised as an audio visual composition and a concert work, and through the analysis and contextualisation of the elements of 'Creative Textual Practice' in this piece for my compositional practice more generally. Beyond this, I also consider the role that Creative Textual Practices might play in the articulation of the research elements of creative

practice research projects, and the ways that this approach might help to articulate layered, nonlinear, and plurivocal understandings of creative practice research undertakings, and of writing.

This research portfolio addresses the following questions:

- How can Creative Textual Practices be defined and understood within music-compositional processes?
- What relationships do Creative Textual Practices establish between musical composition and other artforms?
- How can understanding Creative Textual Practices in and through artistic processes influence the articulation of the research outcomes of a project or body of practice?

This portfolio addresses these questions through the presentation of the creative work, through a video presentation, and through a video performance lecture that combines the creative and critical approaches of the project.

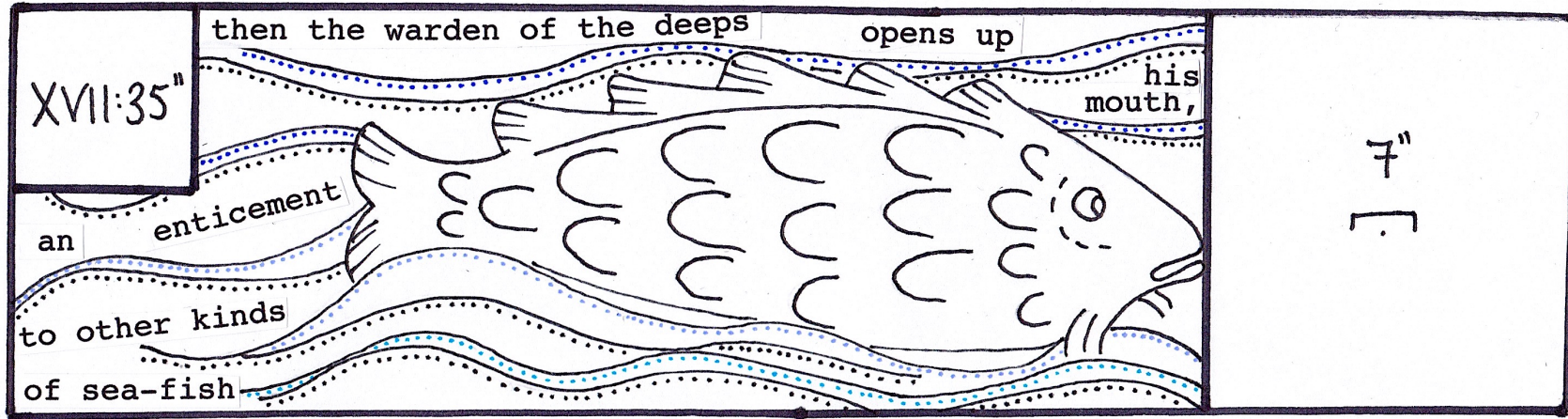


# Methods

XVII:35"

then the warden of the deeps opens up his mouth,

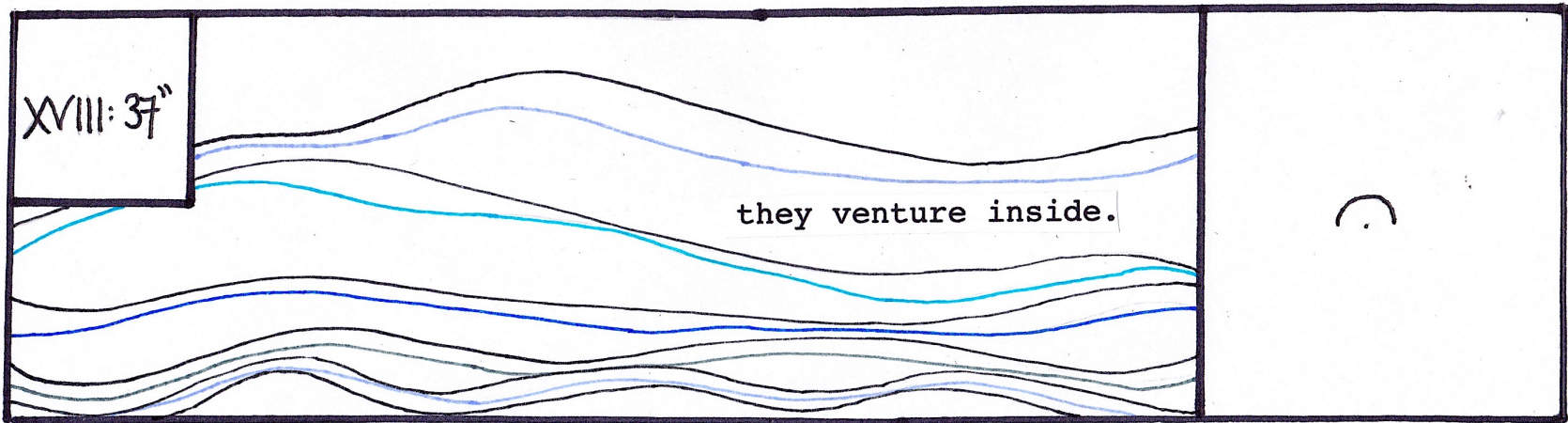
an enticement to other kinds of sea-fish



7  
]

XVIII:37"

they venture inside.



⌒

As part of the research in this project relates to extracting a theme from my ongoing compositional practice, analysis and contextualisation of that theme are key methods for this work. These can be seen exposed primarily in the video lecture but are given focus in both the audio and visual components of the creative work. The compositional practice of highlighting these methods and using them as the focus of a piece is demonstrated by the composition *the whale* itself, but also in the performance lecture video that uses this practice not only as a method for creating new musical works but also as a method of reflection and articulation of research in and for itself. This highlights the importance of retrospective reflection in creative practice research, which has also been the foundation of the research undertaken in this project.

# Dissemination: A/V Presentation

*the whale* was created as a graphic score and a set of corresponding audio fragments and was commissioned by the Siemens Stiftung. In 2020, during the lockdown, I realised the piece as an audio visual composition, with an ensemble of accordion, small wind instruments, voice and percussion (realised by myself) and violin (Alistair Zaldua). This realisation emphasises the role of text and speech in the score and performance of the piece. The audio visual presentation of *the whale* was created as a video work for the Buxton Fringe Festival in 2020. The piece was presented as part of a special set curated by the contemporary music series 'Summit': <https://www.buxtonfringe.org.uk/descriptions2020.html#2781>

A short trailer for the set can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltbO1PZs1FQ>

The full video can be seen at vimeo here: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/433273787>

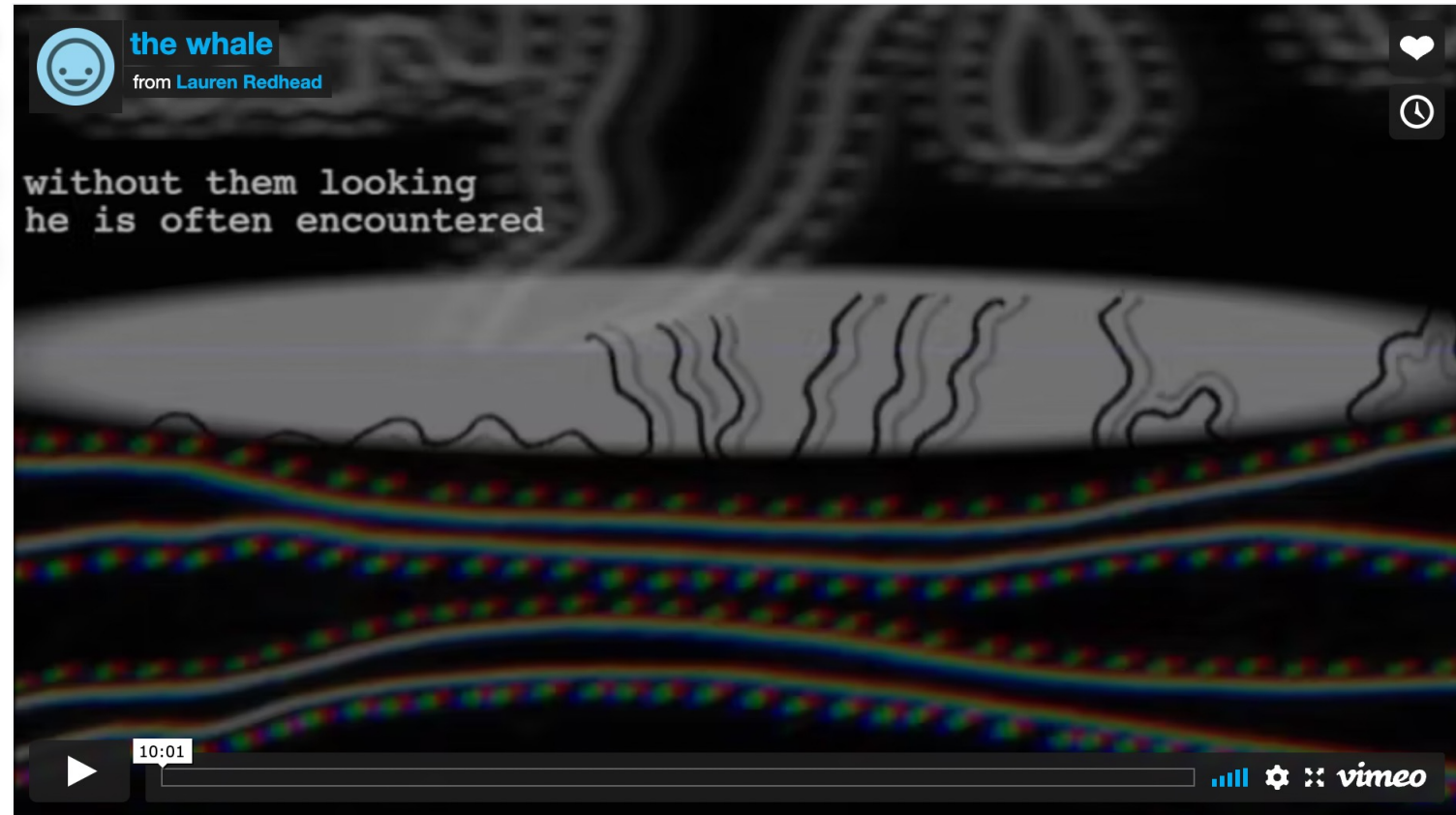
Password: thewhale2020

The video is also available on GRO: <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/28344/>

You can read a review of the festival set here: <https://www.buxtonfringe.org.uk/reviews2020and.html#2781>

Here is a link to the documentation of the Buxton Fringe Festival: <https://www.buxtonfringe.org.uk/descriptions2020.html#2781>

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## Dissemination: Ensemble Proton Performance

A performance of *the whale* for trio (piano/synthesiser, lupophone, kontraforte) was devised with Ensemble Proton (Ben) for performance at the INMM 2021 Tagung. The concert was broadcast online on 10.04.2021, details can be found here: <https://www.neue-musik.org/2021/04/05/konzert-10-4-2021/>

Owing to the nature of the video streamed performance, I created short video clips from the piece's notation that are presented in the silences in the piece, making the video part live-performance and part curated audio-visual work.

A video of the concert can be found online, here: (*the whale* performance begins at 21'52") [https://youtu.be/lwRy3Ud\\_lg0?t=1312](https://youtu.be/lwRy3Ud_lg0?t=1312)



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*Left: still from the performance of the whale by Ensemble Proton.*

# Commentary and Contextualisation

The commentary on this research has the composition, *the whale* (2020). The two specific aspects: the first is a video ideas expressed in this video lecture will be published as an article in the journal *MusikTexte* in 2022. The second aspect of the project commentary is the consideration of how these material ways of working with text, speech and language through compositional means offer opportunities for the reflection on and articulation of research ideas in this project, and as a method for future projects. This is given exposition and demonstration in a video performance lecture that was delivered at the Swedish Research Council and Malmö University 2021 symposium on Artistic Research, titled 'Articulations'.

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7. april – 10. april 2021 online-veranstaltung

verflechtungen II musik und sprache in der gegenwart 74. frühjahrstagung des inmm

	mi 7. april	do 8. april	fr 9. april	sa 10. april
Online-Abruf www.neue-musik.org	<b>VERFLECHTUNGEN</b> Christa Brüstle: Musik – Sprache – Texte. Verflechtungen und ihre Aktualität Christian Grüny: Musik – Sprache – Propaganda	<b>TEXTE</b> Timo Fischinger: Interaktionen. Wie Sprache sich in die Musik einmischt	<b>STIMME</b> Sarah Maria Sun: Musik und Sprache	<b>TRANSFORMATIONEN</b> Lauren Redhead: language as a material process
Lectures 16:00 Uhr	Vorstand des INMM Begrüßung und Einführung	Adam Czizak: Theatertexte nach der postdramatischen Wende	Theda Weber-Lucks: Vokale Performancekunst als universale Sprache	Susanne Készeghy: Klangbilder und Silbensalat M. Handschick / G. De Fazio: Das Künstlerische als Situation Zur Methodik des Forschungsprojekts <i>Complex Home Music</i>
16:45 Uhr	Christian Grüny: Musik – Sprache – Propaganda (Gespräch zum Video)	Timo Fischinger: Interaktionen. Wie Sprache sich in die Musik einmischt (Gespräch zum Video)	Yvonne Spielmann: Elektronisches Vokabular im audiovisuellen Medium Video	Lauren Redhead: language as a material process (Gespräch zum Video)
17:15 Uhr	Plenum	Plenum	Plenum	Plenum
Pause				
Roundtable 18:00 Uhr	Live-Gespräch mit Marcel Beyer Moritz Lobeck	Live-Gespräch mit Gordon Kampe Ole Hübner Mara Genschel	Live-Gespräch mit Sarah Sun Thierry Tidrow Rolf Riehm	Live-Gespräch mit Annette Schmuckli Daniel Ott Isabel Klaus
Pause				
Performance 20:00 Uhr	Live-Portrait: Jonathan Burrows und Matteo Fargion – im Gespräch mit Christian Grüny	Betrommeltes Sprachwagnen mit Nora Gömringer und Günter Baby Sommer	Konzert mit Sarah Maria Sun Klavier Kilian Herold Jan-Philipp Schulze Klavier Werke von Gordon Kampe, Rolf Riehm und Thierry Tidrow	Konzert mit ensemble proton bern Werke von Arvo Pärt, Sigfrid Karg-Elert und Daniel Caux
	Live-After-Show-Talk	Live-After-Show-Talk	Live-After-Show-Talk	Live-After-Show-Talk

Arbeitskreis:  
Margret Poore, Geschäftsführung  
Institut für Neue Musik und Musikerziehung  
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Gefördert von Die Bauarbeiten der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung, Hessisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst, Kulturfonds, Fraunhofer IPT, RheinMain, Pro Helvetia, Wissenschaftszentrum Darmstadt u.a.



## TAGUNG 2021

74. Frühjahrstagung des INMM  
 (Onlineveranstaltung):  
 Verflechtungen II Musik und Sprache in  
 der Gegenwart von Mittwoch 7. bis  
 Samstag 10. April 2021 –  
 Die Veranstaltung ist kostenlos, eine  
 Anmeldung ist erforderlich.

MEHR LESEN



## text, speech and language as material in my practice

- \* texts, instructions, or collage
- \* poetry and concrete poetry
- \* part of audio or sound materials
- \* derived from source materials and documents



## INMM Tagung Video Lecture

As part of the INMM 2021 Tagung on the theme of 'Musik und Sprache in der Gegenwart' I delivered the video lecture 'Language as a Material Process'.

Details of the symposium and the talk can be found here: <https://www.neue-musik.org/2021/04/03/samstag-10-april-transformationen/>

The video lecture can be viewed online here: <https://www.neue-musik.org/2021/04/08/lauren-redhead/>

It is available in GRO here: <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/30745/>

In this talk, I will discuss material processes and creative textual practices in contemporary music and art. In identifying 'creative textual practices' as strategies for composition, I describe the use of text, language and speech as both structuring and performative materials, and the ways that such creative textual practices themselves highlight the performative properties of text. In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, (1984) Julia Kristeva describes the semiotic-material meaning-making process, 'productive violence', (16) and revolutionary practice of working with text in this way, considering what aspects of meaning remain once linguistic meaning in textual communication is degraded.

In order to discuss this, I will briefly consider artworks from other disciplines that employ concrete and sound poetry—such as by Amanda Stewart (sound poetry) and Annette Iggulden (visual art)—and some procedures employed by the Oulipo movement. This leads me to identify how these artists employ text to embrace the familiar, unfamiliar, and uncanny, by intertwining the symbolic and semiotic aspects of written and spoken textual communication. The art theorist Estelle Barrett describes this as the 'hyper-differentiated realm of latent and possible values and meanings' in the work. (2011, 19) Finally, I will discuss my recent composition *the whale* (2020) as an example of the creative textual practice and material processes in sound and notation that I have developed in my personal practice since 2013.

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Left: still from the video lecture  
'Language as a Material Process'.



# ARTI CULA TIONS

Symposium on Artistic Research  
Inkonst, Malmö  
24-25 November 2021



Swedish  
Research  
Council

Symposium Details: [online here](#)

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## Performance Lecture Video Articulations: Theorising in Practice Swedish Research Council and Malmö University

Performing 'the radicality of unknowing who we are becoming'.  
(cf Phelan, 1997, 17).

To create something in a specific way is not in itself a pathway to knowledge. Nevertheless, for the artist-researcher, the process of creation allows insight into the performative nature of materials and their subsequent meaning-making. To this end, practices of performative writing (Pollock, 1998), or performance autoethnography (Denzin, 2003), offer opportunities to understand articulation as a further creative practice; one that is able to investigate itself through and beyond its meaning-making. This performance-lecture will explore my practice research in the materiality of notation within the field of contemporary and experimental music composition, broadly conceived, by using examples of processes and practice from my own creative practice research. At the same time, it aims to reflexively examine the methodology of practice research in music composition and creation, considering creative practice both as its means of investigation and mode of presentation and communication. Here, the performance-lecture is explored as a form of 'writing out' (Igweonu, et al, 2011), as a method in itself, and as an interrogation of method/ology within practice research. Drawing on Knorr Cetina's (2001) concept of 'objectual practice', it critically engages with the academic context by rendering it as inherently performative as is the articulation of artistic research and its related experiences. My aim is to make explicit methods for and of doing and knowing, that are situated in my embodied position as a researcher, composer, performer and improviser, but also to use those same positions to interrogate and question the pathways to knowledge within them. Beyond this, the political connotations of the practice of performative writing are also explored in the way that it, 'expands the notions of what constitutes disciplinary knowledge' (Pelias, 2005, 417), throwing into question not only what disciplines contain or describe, but the way that knowledge is accessed and communicated within them.

### Bibliography

- Denzin, N. K. 2003. *Performance Autoethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Igweonu, Kene, Brian Fagence, Melanie Petch and Gareth J Davies. 2011. 'Revealing the Elusive Obvious: Making sense of creative practice through reflection and writing out'. *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*. 4.2: 225-38.
- Knorr Cetina, Karin. 2001. 'Objectual Practice'. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, edited by Theodore R Schatzi, Karin Knorr Cetina and Eike von Savigny, 175–88. London: Routledge.
- Pelias, Ronald J. 2005. 'Performative Writing as Scholarship: An Apology, an Argument, an Anecdote'. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*. 5, no. 4: 415–24.
- Phelan, Peggy. 1997. *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Pollock, Della. 1998. 'Performing Writing'. In *The Ends of Performance*, edited by Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane, 73–103 New York, NY: New York University Press.

Watch in GRO: <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/30774/>

## Appendix: Score

the whale  
version for ensemble and fixed media fragments  
lauren redhead  
2021

Kompositionsauftrag von Institut für Neue Musik und Musikerziehung, finanziert durch die  
Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung.

Commissioned by Institut für Neue Musik und Musikerziehung, funded by the Ernst von Siemens  
Music Foundation.

Composer's note:

A performance of the piece comprises 18 musical fragments, separated by silence as indicated in the graphic score.

The 18 fragments of the poem should be heard in the performance. They can be sounded electronically, or they may be read by a speaker or another performer.

As a further guide, listening to sound below water from above the water could be imagined.

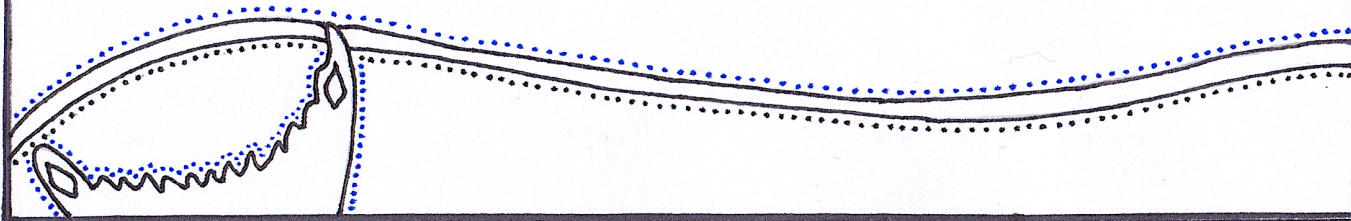


1:10"

I wish to reveal a song

about a certain kind of fish

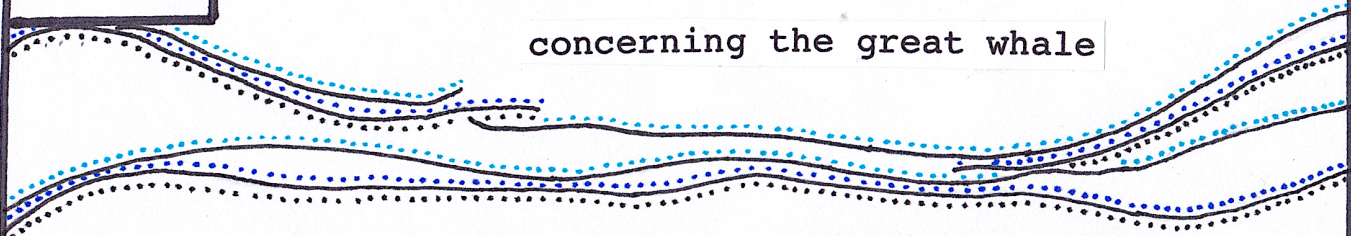
4"  
⌒



11:27"

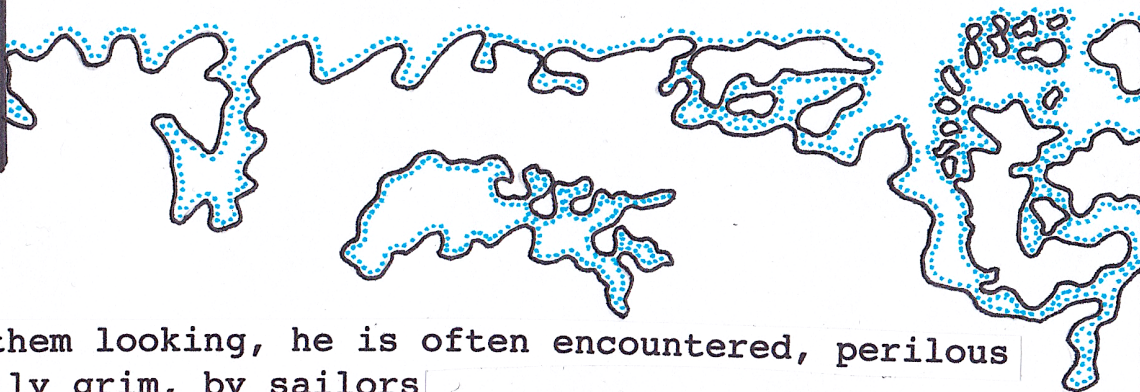
concerning the great whale

3"  
⌒





III:39"

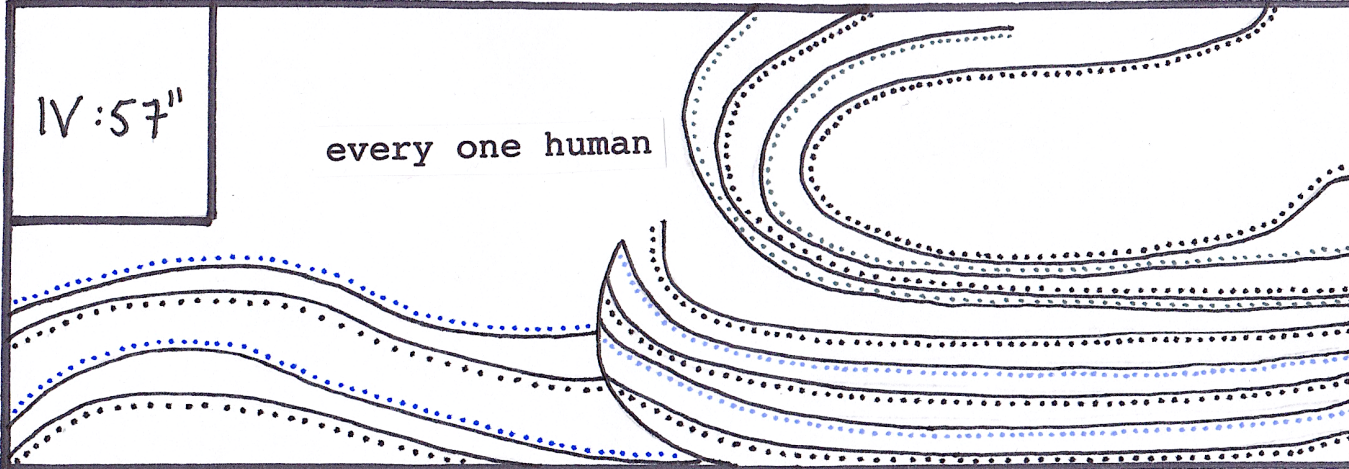


without them looking, he is often encountered, perilous  
and fatally grim, by sailors

7"  
┌  
└

IV:57"

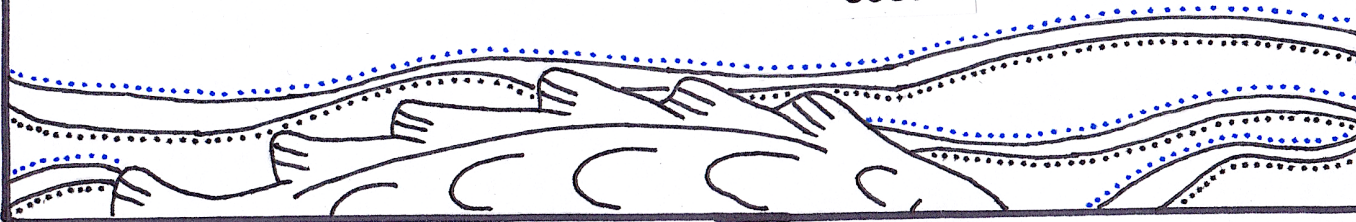
every one human



7"  
┌  
└

V: 29"

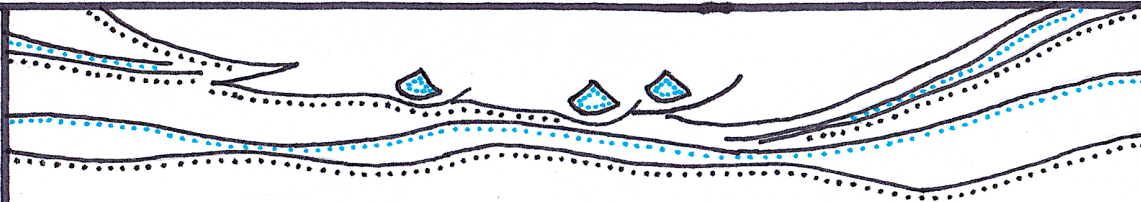
to him a name is conceived, that floater  
in the ancient  
ocean



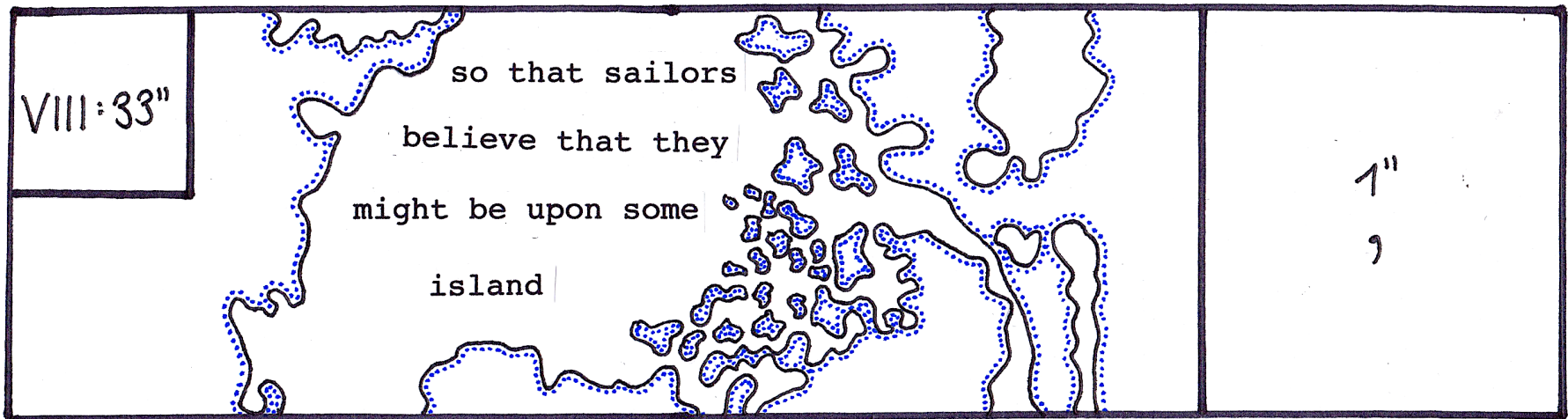
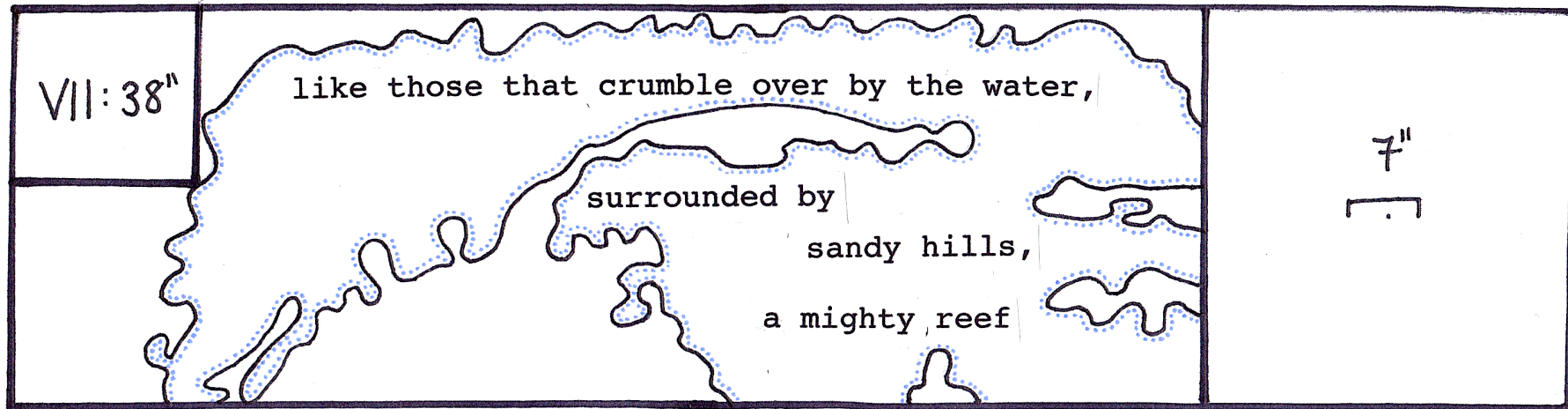
8"  
┌

VI: 16"

his aspect is like a leprous stone



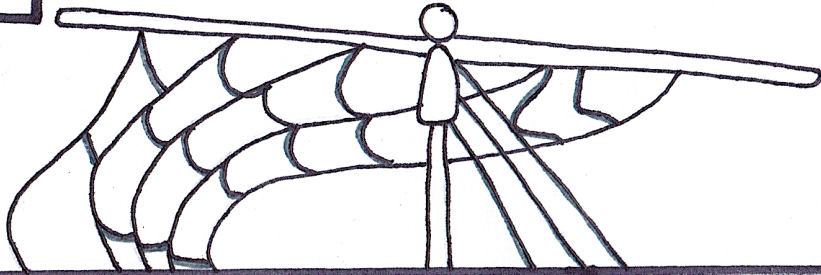
4"  
┌





IX:14"

then, tether to that non-land



4"



X:23"

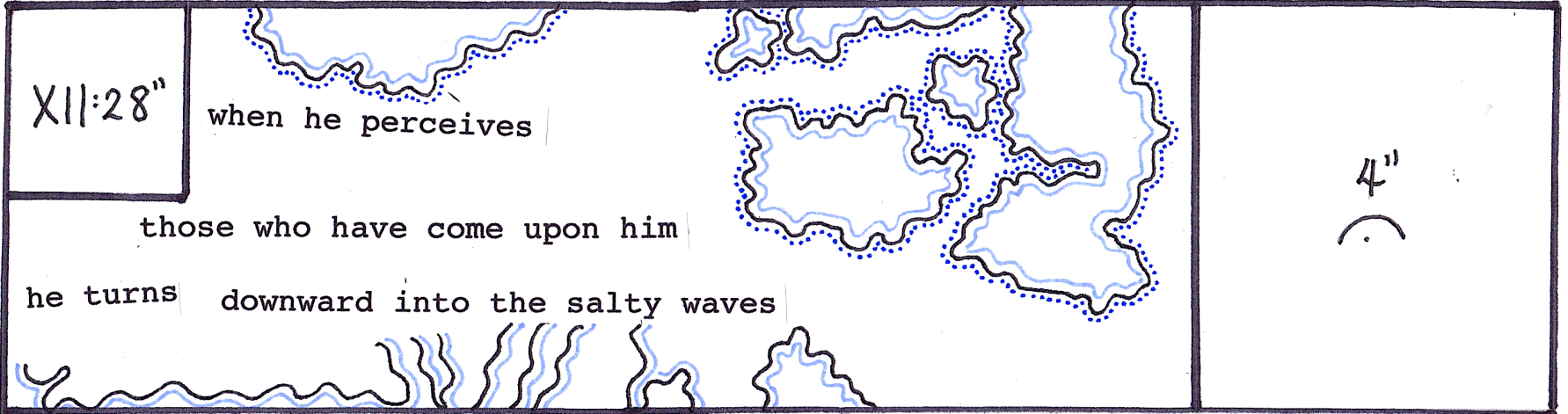
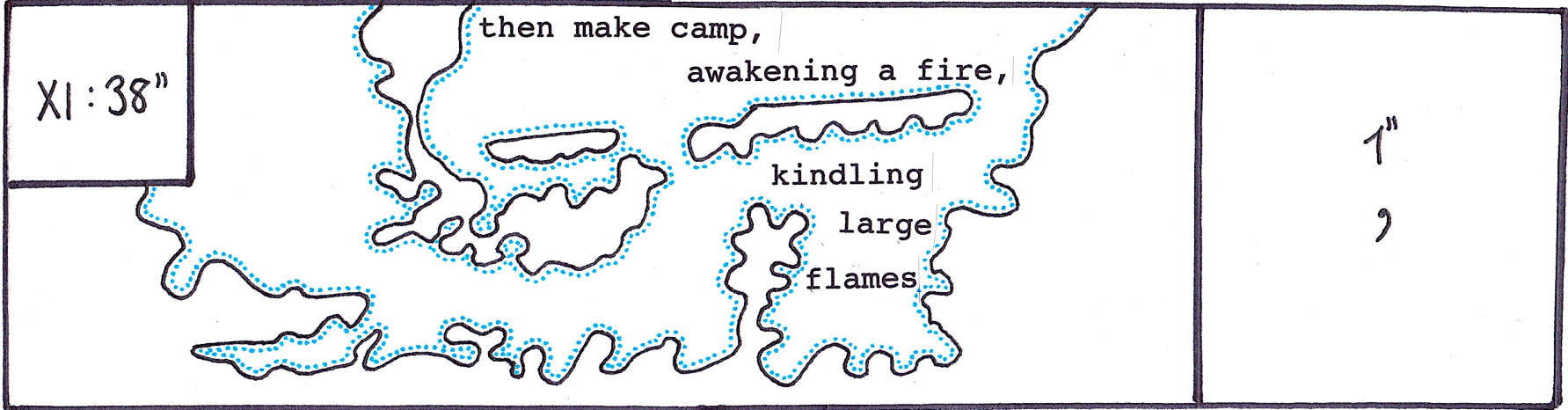
their swimming at an end,  
and go up onto that island

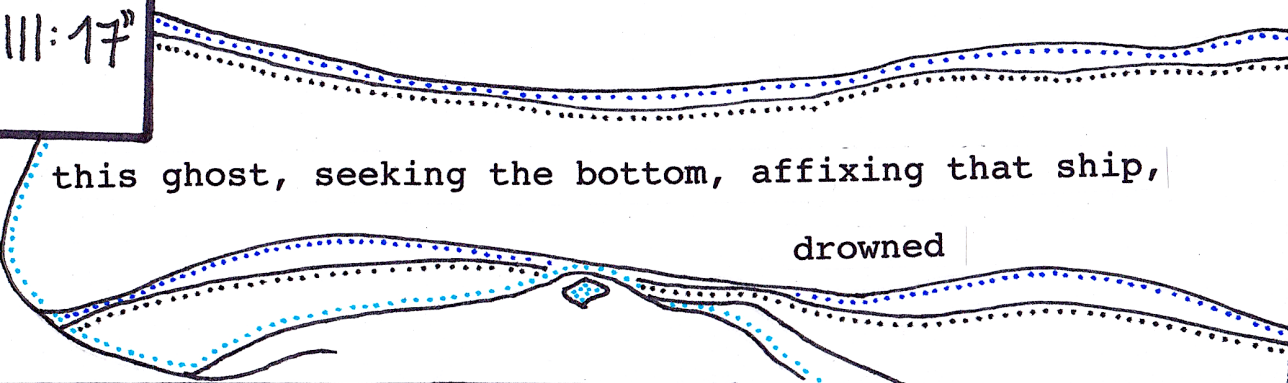


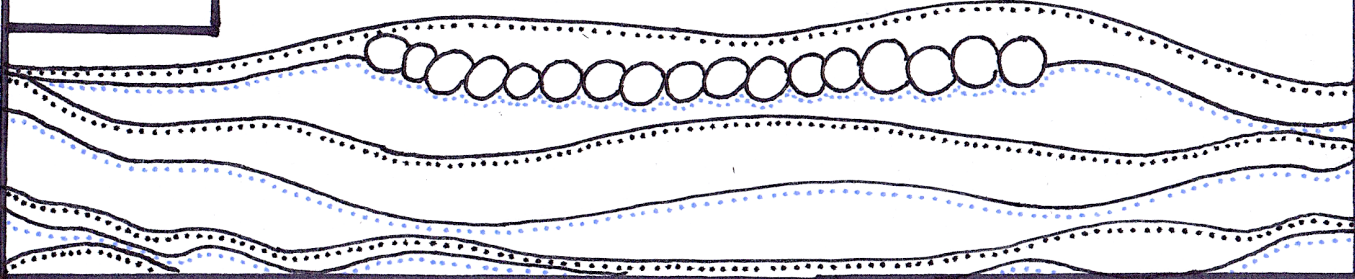
5"







XIII:17"	 <p>this ghost, seeking the bottom, affixing that ship, drowned</p>	5" ⌒
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XIV:49"	 <p>that phantom, the great whale</p>	3" ⌒
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