



Ore

by Christophe Casamassima

Ore completes the Proteus Cycle, a trilogy of books in which the poems are slowly taken over by remix methods and appropriative technologies. *Ore* is the culmination of these technologies: it is made up of 100 centos, of lines appropriated from almost 250 writers, artists, theorists.

The first book, *the Proteus* (Moria Books), begins as a problem of reading between James Joyce's Ulysses and Homer's Odyssey. The poems are, frankly, the protean irony: "how can I know in poetry?" Meaning is relegated to the musical, the fractured and fragmented melodies that begin to take shape as we begin to read or write poetry.

The second book, *Joys: A Catalogue of Disappointments* (BlazeVOX), takes its title from M. Magnus' book, *Puddles*, and like sense, traverses the speculative drama that comes out of reading, in which human sense takes over and, ultimately, begins to break down the innocence of not-knowing and questions the necessity of such knowing. Ultimately, the book "branches inward" to locate the manifest in the one.

Ore, the final "phase" in the trilogy, takes this knowledge (or lack thereof) and poses it against the world of the already-present. In other words, it takes what is readily available—all the literatures and theories and texts in the world—and remixes them to form a new(er), fermented literature, in which the author is more composer than writer, in which the author plunders already established modes of thinking and, by threading associations across millenia of experience, declares that we have used language up.

Of course, this cannot be the end, but a mere step in the circle...

In Ore, Christophe Casamassima locates the hairline fracture between repletion and absence, voice and vacancy. This he breaks open in a sustained act of lyric ventriloquism, a rupture that sets loose the rhapsody and tangle of poetry. Casamassima plays slyly with our sense of authorship, but more importantly and poignantly he invites us to join him in the rapturous, collaborative harmonies that open from the core of any creative act. —Elizabeth Robinson

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Review by Raymond J. Cummings

The metaphysica, the plastic parts of poems

Most of us encounter flash-frame mosaics in television advertising or experimental cinema: video images unleashed at the speed of a loaded Uzi spilling live rounds, seared sublimely onto our retinas. Most of these mosaics seek to convey a sense of narrative by reassembling stolen snippets of different stories as a quick-hit history. So: here is the civil rights movement, here is the 20th century, here is an acclaimed director's work—each distilled into 60-second sensory overloads. We drove our points home in a handful of blinks. We didn't even have to employ a narrator. We are so money. Thanks for dropping in.

What can I say to define my slender pilfering of lines, images?

We are multimedia Merlins. I saw everything is beautiful and the same.

*words are not love
A diamond of pine
I stalk space of these authors*

Christophe Casamassima's *Ore* is a typographic mosaic of typographic mosaics, poems that are pieced together from preexisting poems in ways that come across as incongruously random—before they begin to make a cracked kind of sense, like on a forensics program where someone reconstructs a smashed bottle that was used in a murder, and that reconstruction begets fingerprints, which begets a suspect, which begets a secret narrative that leads our protagonists to the truth. What perfect voice will tell you the truth about wheat? Which is fine, and a pleasant way to spend an evening, but that's hardly what *Ore* is after.

*If you could only whisper: "Who
Who doesn't know that poems are edible.*

In *Ore*, Casamassima cannily exploits the idea that nobody reads poetry, really. He's right, and he's right to remix dozens of verses from poets living, dead, unheralded, and anonymous, many of whom you had to study in high school English, into one-hundred 100% recycled poems that seize the attention, challenge the imagination, and force the reader to find meaning in the fault lines between couplets and stanzas. Addicted to meaning, one could be held prisoner by sentences.

*We began to merge with the unimportant and superfluous
Inventing the poem*

The wholes are foreign to you, the parts even more so. Recombinant, these bits transcend explication, confound, offer succor; they are lingual white noise. *Where are the breaks?* What was the method by which the author fused like lines with like lines?

Have you seen how a book is made and unmade?

The lack of individual poem titles sucks you into the volume, loaded for bear, desperate for logic even as the reconstituted frameworks *are* logical, even though you couldn't imagine how you might explain that to someone else who hadn't wrestled with *Ore* and come away reborn, somehow changed by the pages, the inscriptions, and even the dust on the pictures.