## Centones

## Derivations

John McVey


swimmings of barley
swimmings of Scotch bigg
the swimmings of bisons and the floatings of dead trees imitating the swimmings of the frogs
swimmings of the brain
swimmings of the head
swimmings of the head, and night-mares
the darkenings of his own mind, the swimmings of agony
the cure does produce certain swimmings of the head, certain faintnesses of the knees
in many constitutions swimmings of the head
by reason of swimmings of the heade. Her hayre is all fallen
certain pains and swimmings of the head, and blaming philosophy
with fits and swimmings of the head
not to mistake swimmings of the head for philosophy
let the swimmings of a man in the ocean finally end
in his river-side walks, the circular swimmings of trout blurred swimmings of poetic sight
for whom the swimmings of
the undulations and graceful swimmings of
the very frequent swimmings of my head render walking
not only slow, but often hazardous
or swimmings of rapid rivers
thro' black swimmings of storm and burst seams of blue rain?
the various swimmings of the Negroes
swimmings of his head
swimmings of pots
for "swimmings of pots," suppose
for she saves the swimmings of her bacon-pot for this use
swimmings of purple valor
the morning plunges and swimmings of $1887-8$
would anchor in a dreaming silence to watch the curious swimmings of ephemeral moles
and watch over the sides the swimmings of their Skye terriers
swimmings of the head, dimness of sight, ravings, and profound sleep
the blurred swimmings of buildings faraway
in the free swimmings of the herds
Not the things themselves. Swimmings of light on the smallest things.
John Fowles, The Collector (1963)
the flow of clean water on the back / swimmings of the first

Skimmings of the swimmings (mainly older), rearranged
on, on rotting rack, even on a moor
on our first acquaintance
on agates it has been assumed
on his back, and yawn again
on the banks of the Almond
on a bare sandy spot
on $b c$ - in both cases
on the beach
on the borders
on that branch
on British fossil sponges
on bushes and walls
on the cliffs
on the crests
on the death
on a degree
on the denuded edges
on the development
on each
on the earlier stages
on either
on an excursion
on their faces of fracture
on the figs
on fins
on fossil fishes
on the genesis
on the globe
on the ground
on the habits of
on the other hand
on him
on certain horizons
on the human race
on the inner side
on into the
on a very large scale
on a larger scale
on the larger scale
on the leaf
on at least two
on the line of
on the lines here laid down
on the maintenance of [ the Earth's Internal Heat ]
on the Mammals and Birds of Fran Josef Land
on matters biological
on the Meteorology of Edinburgh
on the middle
on mineralogy
even on a moor
on this occasion
on which occasion
on the occurrence
on the occurrence of
on one part of the earth
on the other hand
on the part of the inhabitants
on the part of nature
on Pilocas
on the point of extinction
on to the primitive
on to the primitive by lines radial
on this prolongation another cork
on rather thin, good cardboard
on the roof of the verandah
on rotting wrack
On Rudimentary Structures and their Meaning
on rushes in a damp hollow
on the same day
on the sea margin and inland
on the scapulars
on side of field (under stones)
on all sides, by solid rock
on each side
on the negative side
on the right hand side
on size and age
on my suggestion
on the theory of
on thin white card
on this view
on his way back
on the western side
on the white phase of plumage
on wrangling, until
and so on

## We might take one or two other cases by way of further

 elucidation.And so I've done. These phrases are selected from ioo hits in search for the word on in this volume, Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, for the promotion of zoology and other branches of natural history. Vol. XIV. 1897-ı9ог.

Dates (e.g., "on the 4 th and the 27th of July, respectively") and two repetitions are excluded. The arrangement is, in its way, alphabetical.
on some results of crossing experiments, 3
on account of
solely on account
not only on the amount of
lastly, the brilliant orange on
on an average
on its long axis
on board
on the body
on the body
on the upper border
on the boundaries of
on to notice the changes
on the cliffs, occasionally
colour variation on
on the continuity of
on the deductions of philologists
on the discoveries and researches
on the domestication of
on that of their domestication
the evaporation goes on
on the evening of
on that evening
on some morphological evidences of
a suggestion on extinction
generally left on the field
on the food supplied to them
on some forms
of form and colour on
on the genesis of some
on a little island like
on the nature of the isolation
on some little-known
but are left on the land
on the land, could only
upon a new lease of life
on lines sufficiently constant
less frequently, on the moors
on a deeper or more
on the elevated mountains
on Naalsoe
sheltered on the north by a steep ridge
on a former occasion
on one occasion
on the occurrence of
to a point on
on the origin of
on some modes of origin of oil
on paper
on these abstruse and difficult problems
bearing on the question
the evaporation goes on at a high rate
on some results of crossing experiments
on the shore
on lake-shores
on each side
on each side
on the eastern side, in the narrow bay on the eastern side of that inland lake
on the inner side
on the mountain sides (plainly to be seen)
on the one side
on the other
on the outer side of the thigh and knee
of the paper. on the right-hand side
on both sides
on some of the older sites
on a malformed specimen
on the dorsal surface
as time went on
on the outer side of the thigh
on tracing back
on a felled "plane" tree
and so on. colour variation
on vertically until
on the way
on the shore
on the surface of running water
on which to hang my observations
on which
on such of the smaller wild
ex Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, for the promotion of zoology and other branches of natural history. Vol. XV. 190I-I904
considers the stove a tree. makes verses.
consciousness of his personal identity confused excess of fancy, ecstasy, makes verses
more in the fresh air than in the room errors as to time and velocity of gait
awkward, lets everything drop
confounds things of the present with those of the past converses with people who are not present
considers the stove a tree and wants to climb up
undertakes many things, perseveres in nothing as if wrapped in a fog
only conscious of himself as in a dream

[^0]and other indifferent things

Frightful dreams, causing anxiety.
Vexatious dreams
Agreeable, merry dreams
Disgusting dreams about dirt, vermin, disease, pus, etc.
Dreams with fixed ideas, dreaming about one and the same
object
Dreams which continued after waking
Lascivious amorous dreams
Dreams which fatigue the head, about scientific things, etc.
Vivid dreams
Fanciful dreams
Dreams about the common affairs of the day, and other indifferent things
Confused dreams
Dreams in a waking state
Dreams about thieves and robbers; About ghosts, etc.;
About defunct persons, burials, etc.
Dreams about misfortunes, adverse circumstances, chagrin, danger, etc.; About diseases; About quarrels, disputes;
About war, bloodshed; About murder
About animals, dogs, cats, etc. About serpents. About vermin.
About water, and danger of water; Fire, and danger of fire...

Entries for dreams (falling under the head "Sleep, morbid," in Samuel Lilienthal (1815-91). Homoeopathic therapeutics (M
$-Z$ ). Second enlarged and revised edition (1879)
sees rats running across the room, sees cats and dogs; tries to jump out of the window.
sits as if in thought, yet thinks of nothing, like a waking dream.
declines to answer questions.
on closing eyes, sees figures of persons.
intellect cloudy, though giving correct answers.
falls into a deep sleep, while answering questions.
thinks he is well.
constantly jumping from subject to subject.
uses wrong words for correct ideas.
thinks she is not at home.
answers correctly, but slowly.
thinks he is roaming over fields or hard at work.
all objects appear oblique.

Sentences in entry for delirium, ex Samuel Lilienthal (181591). Homoeopathic Therapeutics (A - L). Second enlarged and revised edition (1879)

Compare Fever, Mental Derangement, Morbid Sleep and Dreams.
and every object vied with each other
at sea. On
[a] smack, and a letter of credit several portraits left on
his best works, they called on
in the best parlour. On my asking
upon an unfinished picture on
with so much truth and beauty; and, on
of Italian scenery. On
in some measure on the eye
to make a drawing on his slate
with cool grey
on I have no doubt
not a stone lies on that road to me unknown
every object on each bank
on a foundation
on account of his chaste colour, and
the effect candle-light produces on objects
or of large masses of obscurity
on the piano
$\square$
in the morning. on his way
when afloat on
on the river side. The setting sun
ideas they have heard on the stage
and a stroll on the green
and on tasting his own
and on these established his theory (of colour) on canvass, the size of life
his small pictures on
his observations on their general appearance and individual character on sauntering to the bottom
the shadows on the ground very dark
-
on their journey homewards
on their progress up the river
a group of thistles on its bank
their boat on the shallow gravel
for years afterwards. On his making
never to be forgotten, as
on the reflection of near and distant objects in the water
the Seasons. On reaching (the bridge)
on Sunday, at six
$\qquad$
on the cloth being removed
the one to touch on his pictures, and the other
stretched out on the grass
$\qquad$
on, cutting down the willow
$\qquad$
pass on to Light and Shade
on their faults and beauties
that feature alone that stamps it on the memory
on the horizontal line
on the frontispiece
on the present occasion
an object on the horizon
on any difficulties that might arise
branches grafted on the parent stem
a few words on the subject
a few remarks on Perspective
a leek in his hat and rides on a mountain goat
attendant on talent
reflecting on the precarious profession
on the contrary, looked cold
since taste is on the carpet
I often reflect on
books on morality
under a bushel. On
high on walls
dry on the morrow
envoi
all nonsense. I should like it of all things
equally absurd and in place of reading
all the nonsense

Derived from on phrases, scraped/sifted/reordered ex John Burnet (1781-1868), his novel The progress of a painter in the nineteenth century. 2 vols. [in I]. London, 185
by the hand through the mazes of the merry dance
in his hand the model of a cow's head in his hand a couple of large burdock leaves some bank-notes in his hand
the destructive hand of careless neglect
when palette and brushes are not at hand and the house on the right-hand side
at the right hand, as you see
is now tenanted by a boat-builder
and as I have on my left hand
[a] more practised hand would give a few finishing touches
foxiness on one hand, and rawness on the other
ramification of the branches
by the right hand and lifted
try my hand
by the hand, exclaiming
by the hand, and introduced
by the hand, said
the hand under the eye
as they come to hand. Of form
off his hand into a fire
into his hand, examining it
taking his own sketch-book in his hand
in his hand, as a text
of the hand, and telling
pretensions of off-hand dexterity
by the hand, he resumed
by the hand, alleging
by the hand through the mazes of the merry dance
kissed the extended hand
taking him by the hand (on Don Saltero's feats of swimming)
her scrutinizing eye alternatively from his hand to his face to discover those random off-hand dashes
of his picture now in hand
oblique lines
a chequered life
a species of fungus from the water-cask
in his hand. after reading
in his hand
ignorant hand
I long to have the etching-needle in my hand

Using perhaps two-thirds of the hand phrases in John
Burnet. The progress of a painter in the nineteenth century. 2 vols. [in I] . London, 1854
and some words were altogether lost
covered with spines I3
almost entirely covered by the last 14
almost entirely covered 15
punctate and covered with black or brown dots

## covered with spines <br> 17

each covered with a 50
hole in the ground and cover $\quad 56$
are told to lie down and keep still, and are covered with rugs, bushes or grass 59-60
their heads being still covered 60
to remove the covering or look about 60
the women are now told to lie down, and are covered with bushes $\quad 64$
one is above the other and they are covered 130
claimed that the ice which covered 84
the waters that covered the earth ino
covered with lava sheets thousands of square miles in extent $\quad 127$
The bituminous matter is found equally in the calcareous rock and the molasses that covers it I34 *
covered with 140
cover well-nigh $\quad 163$
it covers an area about 179
with covered words, in a letter 226
omits the reference to the "covered words" (bedecketen worten)
and reads 226
cover of a book,
the edges were cut off,
and some words were altogether lost 249
and other rivers, thus covering all the country 331
immense extent of country covered by 33

* S. F. Peckham. "The Genesis of Bitumens, as Related to Chemical Geology." 108 -I39

Cover, covered, coverings ex Proceedings of the American
Philosophical Society 37 (January to December, 1898)
was an affair of much difficulty
on the right side, on touching and when asked to touch the spot, put his finger on she said that it was impossible to touch her cannot bear them touched at first firm to the touch
firm to the touch, and had the colour of skin rough to the touch
she cannot straighten them, and the slightest touch gives pain

Touching phrases ex Jonathan Hutchinson (1828-1913).
Archives of Surgery 8 (1897); epigram ex explanation of Plate CLIV Lupus Vulgaris Lumerbosus
the confused language of disordered nature

| discolored spots | 217 |
| :---: | :---: |
| irregular spots | 217 |
| abraded spots of various size and form, rather thinly scattered | 221 |
| some very dark spots | 265 |
| spots diffused extensively | 177 |
| spots somewhat resembling | 501 |
| arsenical spot | 498 |
| antimonial spot | 498 |
| spot from phosphorous | 499 |
| spots. the first | 499 |
| thoroughly examined it in its various aspects by personal observations on the spot | 356 |
| could point to a spot near | 126 |
| a desirable spot | 10 |
| in the woods, in the spot where he had fallen | 105 |
| connected with a spot | III |
| around the spots | 357 |

217irregular spots
rather thinly scattered ..... 22 I
y177
spots somewhat resembling ..... 501
antimonial spot ..... 498spots. the first499
personal observations on the spot ..... 356
could point to a spot near ..... 126
a desirable spot105
connected with a spot357

Spots ex Western Lancet: A Monthly Journal of Practical
Medicine and Surgery. 2 (1848)
Epigram ex Professor Harrison, "Lecture on the Importance and Mode of Prosecuting the Study of Clinical Medicine" (367-371) : 369
about the axis of the main fold
inner curve ..... 60
an outer curve ..... 60
broad curve ..... 60
northerly curve about the axis of the main fold ..... 34
sharp curve ..... 64
sweeping curves ..... 76
westward. This curve ..... 65
a curve of the oil table ..... 72
at least one structural curve ..... 76
the vicinity of a prominent curve ..... 87
fold is suggested in the curves ..... 97
curves assumed ..... 87
broad curve to the southern base of the hills ..... 116
downward curve of the Puente beds ..... I26
first curve south ..... 199
along the curve ..... 61
Curves ex George Homans Eldridge (1854-1905) and Ralph Arnold (1875-1961). The Santa Clara Valley, Puente Hills and Los Angeles Oil Districts, Southern California. USGS Bulletin No. 309 (Series A, Economic Geology, 91; Series B, Descriptive Geology, II2), I907

| a series of folds | 780-A / 19 |
| :---: | :---: |
| overturned folds | 780-A / 21 |
| their folding broke | 780-A / 30 |
| folds. doubtless | 780-B / 40 |
| also later folding accentuating | 780-B / il 4 |
| local folding | 780-B / 122 |
| more or less complicated folds | $78 \mathrm{I}-\mathrm{B} / 22$ |
| upward folds | $78 \mathrm{I}-\mathrm{B} / 22$ |
| downward folds | $78 \mathrm{I}-\mathrm{B} / 22$ |
| folds of certain types | $78 \mathrm{I}-\mathrm{B} / 22$ |
| complicated by minor folding and much faulting | $78 \mathrm{I}-\mathrm{B} / 23$ |
| these folds therefore offer some encouragement | 78I-B / 26 |
| broad and gentle folds | 783/43 |
| and older beds, where the folding | 783/159 |
| close folding | 783 / i61 |
| in which the folding is more open | 783 / 161 |
| folding of | 783/162 |
| folding does | 783/162 |
| folding which | 783 / 162 |
| separated one from another by folds that bend | 783 / 162 |
| or by unfolded | 783/162 |
| experiments in folding | 784 / 31 |
| periods of folding | 784 / 71 |

About a third of all folds and foldings in entire volume Contributions to Economic Geology (Short Papers and Preliminary Reports, 1925) : Part I. - Metals and Nonmetals Except Fuels, Issues 777-783 (1926).

USGS Bulletin number / page number.
with all the signs of ..... 13
signs of life ..... 33
no visible sign ..... 36
the ordinary signs ..... II 3
well-marked signs ..... 117
absence of all signs ..... i I 8
the ordinary signs ..... 135
abnormality, neither could any sign ..... 140
signs are not clear enough ..... I 89
the signs that bid us hope ..... 203
ultimately after all signs of depression ..... 214
showed signs ..... 223
the first visible sign ..... 242
(an important diagnostic sign in this condition) ..... 257
(the deaf take to signs) ..... 265
if signs ..... 288
in some of its signs ..... 303
physical signs ..... 304
physical signs did not ..... 305
evident signs ..... 305
before physical signs developed ..... 306
characteristic physical signs ..... 309
abnormal physical signs. clearly ..... 310
physical signs had also ..... 313
showing signs ..... 28
signs detected ..... 334
signs on ..... 339
and other signs pointing ..... 345
the most important differential sign ..... 384
but whatever he felt he made no sign
scarcely an abnormal sign 403
signs whatever
signs could be detected
signs. on that day 407
late development of physical signs
(This condition was not suspected during life.)
and hence the chief sign 409
signs were detected, and again 410
the sign and position 422
showed in the cases examined no sign 438
no physical sign 473
physical signs 478
well-marked signs 486
to show signs [ in Prussia ] 492
and universal sign of 542
stereotyped signs 547
signs, but where the vital forces are $\quad 566$
and signs of
involved and signs of 593
$\qquad$
signs of failure 130
signs of congestion 307
periphery, the signs of 41 II
all signs of emotion 349
signs of consolidation 402
signs of disintegration 520
all the signs of 597
awnder wander
to awnder is a matter of fact, and is the subject of evidence
producing a curiosity seldom met with; one river running south, and another north for half a mile, and having only a path-road of about three feet awnder.

Righteousness, s[ee]. cysiawnder
that he well awnder-stood me
Awnder, see Undern.
Web auf Awn der Inneren-ob dem nein wegen
Grund- und Awnder
awn der sone
awnder Smeth fro' Paisley?
ten or twelve yards awnder on pasture
wander
awnder
oftimes mis-OCR'ed for asunder. evidently a word in Welsh.

[^1]away
away
rest fall away
running away from, the
(see move)
fill
space to fill
gone
long gone
long gone by now
hedge
hedge beside
if (see line)
latest
this latest you're trying to beat
line
a shorter line
that line is slow
you're still there in that line
if you were in this line you'd be (see gone, see out)
lines
a few bare and skeletal lines
a few lines
instead of a few lines
rocky lines
move
move away
moving
leaves moving
noise
familiar noise (see racket)
out
out of here
racket
this racket
reckless
said
might have said
that (see line)
this (see line)
track
to get back on track
what track is that
waves
stupid waves

Selections from Pasadena / November-December 1974
lexicon-ized June 2012
again
angry
don't you ever get angry?
anything (see else)
around
way around
there's no way around
away
push it away
circles
circle and circle
same circles
clack clack
close
concrete
more concrete
depended
determine
can't determine
can't determine the mechanics
else
anything else
hand
at hand
in hand
(see pencil)
keys
on the keys
pounding on the keys
leaves
lithography
manner
in such manner
mechanics (see determine)
more (see concrete)
move (see think)
new (see nothing)
nothing new
nothing (see new)
occasion
specific occasion
other (see time(s))
paper (see typing)
pencil
no pencil in his hand
plain
so plain
plumbing (see walls)
pounding (see keys)
read
I don't read you
reread
saddle
mountain saddle
losing saddle of it
simple
so simple
specific (see occasion)
story
an old story
structure
at the dinner table he [who?] erected this linguistic structure
that was really impressive right before our eyes and ears
tell
difficult to tell
think
don't think
don't think but move
time(s)
other times
waste of time
wastes of time
understand
can't understand
typing
so much typing
how can you be doing so much typing
someone in the building typing, a paper
volumes
volumes of it in libraries
walls
plumbing in the walls
waste(s) (see time)
ways
find ways
work(s)
getting work
nothing works

Derived from $5+$ typewritten pages, single-spaced and thin margin, tour de force typewriter miseration II March I974.

20 June 2012
as regards the earliest times
it was not overgrown with wood, but a well
further he durst not proceed
a voyage to a distant
article of their property
who was a friend
destitute
a stick in his hand
sticks, the scene
when next he dined
-
whereby he is
as regards the
earliest times
both
fragments discernible from mis-scanned pages 132/134 (and preceding pages), "Narrative of a Visit to the Ruins of Tahrie, the supposed site of the Ancient City of Siraff, also an Account of the ancient Commerce of the Gulf of Persia, \&c" by Captain G. B. Kempthorne, I. N., in Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society 13 (1857)

This book contains derivations from other texts, all but two of them from sources available via Google Books, and each of those (with one exception - the first) being a single preI923 volume. Most of these pieces were composed with my tumblr blog asfaltics in mind; all of them appeared there, often headed by an image of some sort.

It was the images that in many cases arrested my attention, encouraged me to ramble and prospect through the technical article or entire volume at hand, and even provided some hints about terms that might be found in sufficient abundance to yield some kind of verse.

The images are often accidents of the scanning process, or some interesting and even beautiful flaw in the scanned cover. In their error, they're tangential to their texts. (One recurring tag is non sequiturs.) I've tended not to post images without text, and ordinarily have used at least two units of text: (I) an epigram or title, and (2) an extract either from the source of the image, and/or from elsewhere. I have also been at pains to provide bibliographic information, links, and even identification of the holder of the scanned book. Many of my asfaltics posts are emblematic in this way, in which they are the sum - or some other function - of their parts.

It is odd to see these pieces together, outside of their asfaltics context, denuded of their images and of the language making connections to those images, shorn of links to their sources. Odd also to see them one after another, in no particular order, as if they came into being in one fell swoop, rather than over two or three years in tides of densities and thinness, more text and less, more image and less, color and grey. (I have been using tumblr for over four years; my posts total I, 228 as of 25 July 2015.)

URLS of all these pieces are listed on pp 38-39.
cento / centone
I came across the term cento in The Guardian, in one of Billy Mills's "Poster Poem" essays inviting submissions of poetry on a theme, that month's being "found poetry." Wikipedia
offers some information and scholarly references, along with this etymology :

The Latin term cento derives from Greek $\kappa \varepsilon ́ v \tau \rho \omega \nu$ (gen. $\kappa \varepsilon ́ v \tau \rho \omega v o \varsigma)$, meaning "'to plant slips' (of trees)." A later word in Greek, кév $\tau \rho o ́ v \eta$, means "patchwork garment."

A cento would appear to be more intentional, more worked, than a found poem. The parts are found, indeed, but then the elaborations happen : arrangings and re-arrangings, selections and deletions. Groupings. A listening for music, rises and falls of sound and, potentially, sense. This covers some of what I do with my derivations from telegraphic codes and other sources. Hence the title of this volume.

Why derivations?
Probably because they permit an improvisatory attitude that I could not achieve with "original" writing, in which (I imagine, probably wrongly) words and syntax to be drawn from some internal space, and need to mean something... I write this with no confidence whatever... except that I become progressively less coherent... Repetition and variation (mumbling) are much in evidence here, deriving either from phrases oscillating around single words or short expressions, or in the index-style - with its repetitive see also's - that appear in two of the pieces (away and again).

There's some kind of music there, anyway.

This directory can also be found at
http://jmcvey.net/centones
where titles will link to their respective pages.
21

certain swimmings of, blurred swimmings of 5
swimmings of, blurred swimmings of 5
asfaltics.tumblr.com/post/ $117954500826 /$ certain-swimmings-of-blurred-swimmings-of
on, on rotting wrack, even on a moor 7
02840072826/on-on-rotting-rack-even-on-a-moor

## on some results of some crossing experiments, 3 Io

$103778503156 /$ on-some-results-of-crossing-experiments-3 0364772385 I / on-some-results-of-crossing-experiments-2 10364526550I / on-some-results-of-crossing-experiments-I
considers the stove a tree. makes verses 13

and other indifferent things I4
wrong words for correct ideas i5 $114963154496 /$ and-other-indifferent-things
and every object vied with each other 16

$$
106678662396 / \text { and-every-object-vied-with-each-other }
$$

by the hand through the mazes of the merry dance 19

IO5981335496/by-the-hand-through-the-mazes-of-the-merry-dance
and some words were altogether lost

$$
\text { was an affair of much difficulty } 23
$$

the confused language of disordered nature 24



[^0]:    Selected from entry for mania, ex Samuel Lilienthal (181591). Homoeopathic Therapeutics (M - Z). Second enlarged and revised edition (1879)

[^1]:    A hurried compilation of signs in Edinburgh Medical Journal
    Vol XXXVI.—Part I. (July to December 1890), I891

