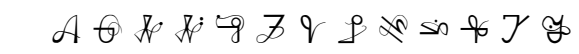
CHRISTIN CALL

Given the kinesthetic and visual qualities that enable Christin Call's "alphabet poetry," it is perhaps no surprise that ballet provided her initial entry into the world of the arts, and that her paintings and installations have been exhibited successfully in local galleries. These poems are . . . well, what are *these poems? They seem to be utterances from a different world, tribal or mythic (at any rate, certainly non-technological), transcribed in an alphabet of the poet's own design, complete with an English-friendly dictionary component. Behind it all, there is a strong sense of a people's history and psychology, and of a culture that in some ways resembles—and yet is not—our own. These pieces are intended for their primary presentation to appear in one-of-a-kind handwritten books of Ms. Call's creation, on paper resembling delicate leaves and hand sewn into covers (also handmade by the poet) that are as sensuously thick as thatch. But even in standard print on this page, their charm and invention and mystery remain, I trust, difficult to resist.*
—**Albert Goldbarth**



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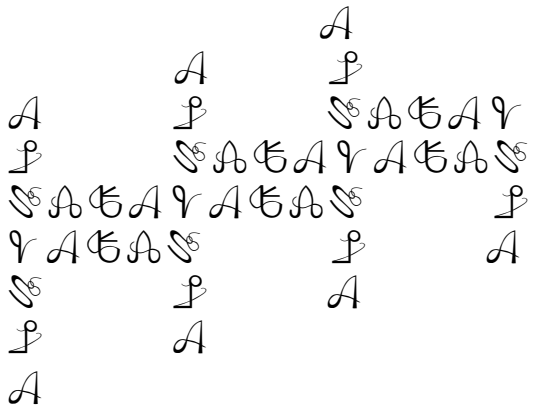
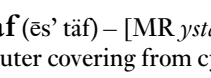
M N O P Q R S T U V W Y

Meditation of Barkstripping

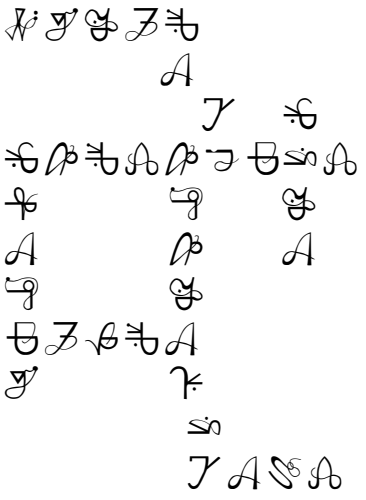


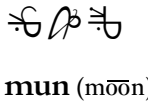
fyga (fē' gä) – [EHP *filigas*, the newborn's caul > LHP *fylga*, ceremonial clothing of the betrothed] n. The protective outer layer of the tree trunk.



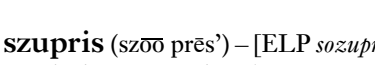
ystaf (ēs' täf) – [MR *ystantaf*] v. 1. To strip the tough, outer covering from cysta in preparation for carving. 2. To unclothe.

Meditation of the Replenished

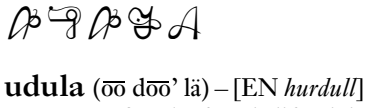




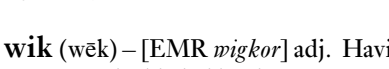
mun (mo͞on) – [MidP *murruin ta*, the fiber of cattail stalks] n. The delicate extension from the lower arm limb, comprising five dexterous anomalies.



szupris (szo͞o prēs') – [ELP *sozupriati*, the bird of the long, curved neck > HP *sozuprus*, the colt's first attempts on its legs] adj. Lanky or splindly.



udula (o͞o do͞o' lä) – [EN *hurdull*] n. 1. An indention or recess. 2. The female life-giving organ.

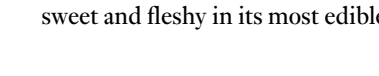


wik (wēk) – [EMR *wigkor*] adj. Having been advanced in age and whittled by time.

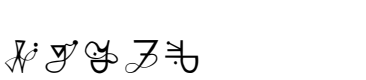
revna (rēv' nä) – [MN, *rev*] n. 1. A ferocious ravishment of oneness, virtue. 2. A possessor of nubile beauty. v. To enamor in desirous, intimate behavior.

kays (kä ēs') – [ELP *kauisn*, the revival of the seasons > MidHP *kaisn*, the return to favorable pasture > LN *kayis*, resiliance] n. A second-coming. adj. That which is delightfully unforeseen.

mjadro (m jhäd' rō) – [LP *majiade*, eyelashes > MR *mjiad*] n. The matured ovary of the flowering plant, sweet and fleshy in its most edible state.



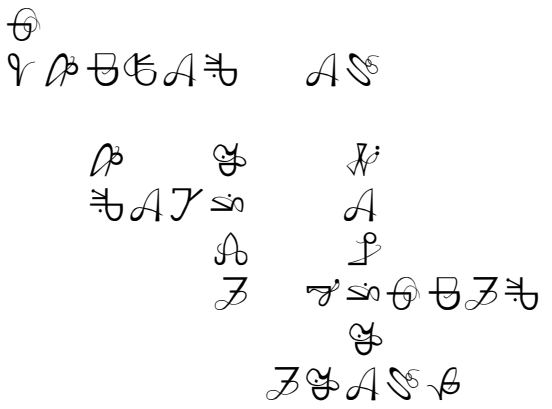
mila (mē' lä) – [MidN *mola*, curve] v. To touch as a whisper, with affection. n. A caress.

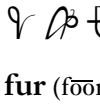


čolen (shō' lo͝on) – [EN *čolan*] n. The adornment at the flower head that fringes the reproductive organs.

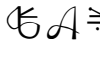
nakris (näk rēs) – [MN *nakre*, the treasure of the mollusk] adj. As the pearl's luster.

Meditation of a Burial Rite



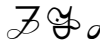


fur (fo͞or) – [EN *fura*] prep. In a place beneath.

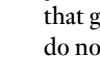


tanay (tŭ nä' ē) – [EN *tajnuat*, the last, shallow breath] n. A deciduous tree of the genus *Bangra* with thin but thickly clustered branches that droop under their own weight. Leaves are small and of a feathery consistency.

čagila (shä gē' lä) – [EMR *gilarud*, one who composes melodies to the rhythm of waves breaking against cliffs] n. A bird of the genus *Galanin* with purplish-red plumage and known for its melodious call.

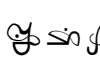


elayv (ē lä' ēv) – [HP *luvd*, stone] n. pl. The structures that give distinct shape to living organisms and in death do not decay.



qibren (kēb' ro͝on) – [EHP *rayon*, stillness > MidHP *ryun*, tightly packed dirt] v. To partially bury. In the High Plains a grieving journey to the forest involves planting the bleached bones of a singing bird partially visible underneath the boughs of the tanay.

lise (lē' so͝o) – [EN *lissau*] n. One or more persons and myself.



naki (nä' kē) – [HP] n. 1. The darkness cast by obstructed light. 2. The vivid memory or sudden recollection of a vital force of a departed being. 3. The Legend of Naki, a woman who set out on a grieving journey, perished in the forest, and came to inhabit the shadow of the tanay.

brun (bro͞on) – [EN *burin* > MidHP *bruin*, knowledge yet to be grasped] adj. Overwhelmed or surging with intensity.

This page is sponsored by Utah State University Press and the May Swenson Poetry Award.