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KAREN GARTHE

# The Banjo Clock



University of California Press Berkeley Los Angeles London

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University of California Press Berkeley Los Angeles London



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This project is supported in part by an award  
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University of California Press, one of the most distinguished  
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world by advancing scholarship in the humanities, social sciences,  
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Foundation and by philanthropic contributions from individuals  
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University of California Press  
Berkeley and Los Angeles, California

University of California Press, Ltd.  
London, England

© 2012 by The Regents of the University of California

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Garthe, Karen, 1949–.

The banjo clock / Karen Garthe.

p. cm. — (New California poetry ; 34)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-520-27316-0 (pbk. : alk. paper)

I. Title.

PS3607.A777B36 2012

811'.6—dc23

2011043106

Manufactured in the United States of America

21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements  
of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R 2002) (*Permanence of Paper*).

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To my champion

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*'The door opens,' says the language that doesn't say  
'someone opens the door.' Is it mother, is it cat, is  
it wolf, is it you?*

HÉLÈNE CIXOUS



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*Fanta grape*

I was tasting the Molotov vapor  
wick-soaked gasoline  
furthering its career  
hoisted to meet the numb cold permanently  
jingling coins and oily paper money  
lasting outlasting debris  
smacking my tongue to its tusks  
dipped in a *Fanta grape*  
thumbed at the top shaking



---

## Rid the kitchen

What'll I do to repair the mines and files of a breach of a hundred anemic fadings  
    features rattled  
    and so harmed  
warehouse motes   huddles I sang to  
cold blood   twangy raw ends   spit of crazy rolled over  
                    the lot  
                    the warehouse   row of shoes  
            I found  
            the suicide on the desk  
& the contraption I know as the only thing to be awed by  
due diligence

---

## Ikebana

Another sleeping limo driver and too much guessy

Lowdown

*Overnaming*, hopping the magnification of any resemblance to 100%

The way “call another boom delivery” costs more than itself

A biding sparkle, wry barbell maintenance

Finally, to add the *craquelure* of beauteous scarring

A small common tool that comes into clear view without its task and

The motion of new utility

---

# Gorge

Baleen torqued hipped Gorge

*turned* in drying stiffening

*working up to* its crevasse

Looming

rippled blues

of what to feed the fathoms but take one's time

dark passes

gimps on clever

recedes as from out-of-style consciousness, out-of-style rescue

scarlet enmities/pieties cruise

This, your playmate

This, your fill

of plebiscites whiskered to yello age

plump

rosy permanents

stun these sharpshooters

this wall with its crevasse

---

## Ink Runs

Ink Run *damn ink*  
*with its bit-play on startle* the temporary lease curls  
its glycerin, its fancy quiver                      bears struggles, repeat: *struggles*  
down quibbling sludge eddies and mercury bumps  
*transport warmed from holding the quiet, repeat*  
*The Quiet sinking down moves on*

---

## REHAB (we want grace walls)

Something to it, a line to start rehab and democratize the body's  
frail thrashings  
waterslapping deletions  
This skyline's Beijing's dovecote but destination *Song of America Cartoon*  
A wide-eyed midge,  
the heroine's flight to restore  
bulging Popeye, coy Betty mincing her pinpoints  
shrugging  
*Oh! Oh! What do we want?*  
to the distance that quits her as she'll quit others

*Crescendo: I got a message from my love in the ocean, there in the water  
particled by sound*  
a line to start the journey beach-cheap . . . Beijing-style  
Towers  
Tiles  
Totems

To haul frail deletions, bedside adorables as kittens sweet in their buttons  
to the monstrous frail  
*Tenderize their water*  
*And their air*  
the Future Gates  
the iron dollops of *We want grace walls*  
easy maintenance

---

## National sky

far spicy arithmetic, petals of  
*Sugar in the coffee day*  
rasher  
of national sky, yellowing dates hang their chits in atmosphere  
zone the yellowing  
news and debris  
shrimp tin in the sink  
a mug of memorabilia's  
pinless grenade  
more ash than saying THE FOG IN A BLEND OF SIMPLES escalating fugue  
not a cloying phobic or a sad brown nettle  
just the hustle of weightless  
*furrowing thru tinkling empties, clank of a full can*  
*Trying*  
*Managing*  
wiles grayed down from an unseen flipping point  
pivot the speaker  
in maize more green than stalwart  
more  
innocently stalled  
and far more breached and dismayed

---

## Buckle up, Sweetie

glory wreathes, flutes

to Corinthian foliage, the heavy tops of stone

Who is crying

and holding her eyes?

Whose impervious listens? Stick tables and chairs bite gravel

*Would Harry talk to Jane if  
she didn't have money? Whose della Robbia,  
whose travertine Brahms  
demotic  
double-teams the gorgeous transvestite?*

Buckle up, Sweetie

and keep a stable chronology

the demonstrative kindness of elderly shut

night

figments, and early modes of play

---

*Piranesi*  
*under*  
*The Keystone of A*

You must feel warmed by Helen's small fires by inscription as vine and

Episode Fragments

You must converse in a niche to the doll's effigy

By Helen's you must feel warmly a pillow decanting widow tea drops

Pale for the linen the sky pushed formally jellies on

Armies surrounding the largo base and Piranesi numbering the plates

The wedding cake tier undoing

Doorways arbors

Augustan seizures mounds gnawed filigree and bricksworn sibilant hours

Walk the lion scourge precisely



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