

1. Front

2. Blessed with his mother's tongue and his father's front
3. He hung silent down his never-blushing head; and all was hush'd.
4. Had he his hurts before?
5. Aye. On his front.
6. Had I as many sons as I have hairs, I would not wish them to a fairer death.
7. *Excerpts from definitions of Front found in my parents' 1939 edition of Webster's New International English Dictionary and in my grandparents' 1913 edition of Funk and Wagnall's.*
  
8. Front is a verb
9. To front means to send forward: to front me ten is to lend me ten and I'll hold it for you for a while.
10. To front can mean to lie, or obscure the truth.
11. Or, it can mean to bring on, as in to present
12. 'Enid daily fronted him with some fresh splendor.'
13. Tennyson, Idylls of the King, c. 1870
14. In Phonetics to front means to form the k in keep, but not the c coop.
  
15. Front is also an adjective.
16. The front garden.
17. Front seat.
18. Front wheels.
19. Front legs.
20. The front room, or parlor.
21. In theater, the front of the house means everything in the theater, including the personnel, that is not behind the curtain.
22. In restaurants the front of the house is whatever or whoever is not in the kitchen.
23. Phonetically, as an adjective: the eee in eve, and the a in ale are front sounds.
  
24. Front is also a noun (you can be a front, or have a front).

25. A dicky is a front, a shirt breast and collar with no sleeves or back.
26. A woman's hair piece, consisting of just a bit of hair over the forehead is also a front.
27. Front of the body.
28. Front of the line.
29. Front of the bus.
  
30. The beginning of summer is its front. This disorients me. Is summer coming from somewhere else? and as Spring ends, summer arrives, riding up over the hill, just in time. If summer came late would we have no season at all while we waited? I think of summer emerging from spring, but maybe summer comes from Fall and depending on how big a summer it is, arrives more or less soon.
31. Does a big summer move more slowly?
  
32. A weather front is a Front:
33. "I like watching the thunderheads and the super cells form, the clouds and when the air masses mix.
34. Just watching how the clouds just change colors and change shape and forms and then the winds pick up and it gets cool
35. and you can just feel the pressure change in the air and the smell
36. and it's just fresh as *fresh* snow, fresh as a fresh clean snow.
37. It's like it's alive but it's not alive."
38. Wayne Daily, [Lost in the Storm Part 1](#), NY Times Sept 13, 2018
  
39. The front is the zone of conflict between armies
40. The borders of nations are where fronts meet.
41. I approach the border and face it as I hope it wants to be faced so that I can pass through it as quickly as possible. It has its own laws. I know some of them, but once I'm within a border my rights are not the same as when I'm on either side of that border. A border is a front-realm, fragile, dangerous and opaque.
  
42. Front means forehead, this is one of its oldest meanings.

43. My mother often remarked on my sister and my foreheads. I didn't think our foreheads were particularly remarkable. She said we had beautiful foreheads. I remember noticing how deeply affectionate this pleasure in our foreheads was from her. Not prone to compliment, she valued our foreheads highly.

44. A front is something to hide behind, like a mask, a brand, a business or maybe a lawn.

45. Phonetic (noun): the front is the middle part of the upper surface of the tongue, between the 'blade' and the back.

47. To be front-less is to be shame-less, meaning without loyalty or care. Being shameless is alright, until someone gets hurt or elected.
48. To confront is to come face to face with an enemy or a problem. To face the problem's face with your face. "I was disoriented, incapable of confronting the Other." Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Mask, Grove Press, 1952.
49. To affront is similar, but adds a slap. To be affronted is to have your front violently disturbed. A slap in your front's face. "I felt the knife blades sharpening within me." Frantz Fanon.
50. Front and identity are similar. The difference is that front has a location and the performer can face it, or not, while identity is a cloud, or a status granted on immigration. When I lived in Belgium my identity card stated that I was a 'permanent stranger.'
51. I can create an identity. I can also create a front.
52. I can assume an identity. I can assume a front.
53. I can be assigned an identity, like a gender and have it to fight with or against all my life.
54. I carry an identity. I place a front.
- 55. Front could be anywhere I choose to place it, or any shape, inside my body or out.**
56. Identity can emerge from place, but it is not a place.
57. Front is a place.
58. It's also an action.
59. It's also a quality.
60. In performance, we move through all of these meanings.
61. The performer's front is a projection: an imagined attention source.
62. Created and placed, it becomes a material to work with.
63. For a performer, fronting is an act of imagination, an extension of self beyond self that renders a front-thing, made out of what they tend to in the world and what other people can tell them about themselves along the way.

64. Fronting. To front. Where's front. Down in front. That's their job. Performers.

65. If they are post-modern realists, performers front The Real.

66. If they're Enid, they front with splendor, daily.

67. They cannot front the real without studying their days, in all the plainness of those days.

68. They can't front splendor without tending to the very edges of their world, the thunderheads and super cells, fresh as *fresh* snow.

69. A performer's front is a spell, invoked and cast. A potion made of gestures, creatures, smells, heat and words. Toil and trouble. Like any magic it's between real and not real.

70. **"It doesn't have a heart beat and a soul but it's like it does... it's like a living breathing thing just forms and just has all this power. (...)** You can ooh and aah at it but don't go try to pet it."

71. Wayne Daily, NY Times, 2018

72. Although it plays, pretends, performs, front can tear things up.

73. It can sharpen the blades.

74. It can even be the sharpened knife blades within.

75. The performer is responsible for the front they create.

76. It's a risk. It demands skill

77. and still... I can never fully know what's seen, heard or felt when I create a front.

78. I can only guess.

79. As that guess extends out and returns over me, I'm in the green room of a breaking wave.

1. *I'm interested in how performers work; how in reaching toward being seen, heard and felt they create something other than themselves. Concerned by the use of the word 'performing' as a negative, I started this piece of writing by studying The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice by Jonas Barish, UC Press, 1981. After an exhaustive examination of all the ways in which performances and*

*performers have been vilified since Plato, Barish concludes this book with a defense of performance as a form of play. I also used the 1939 edition of the Webster's New International English Dictionary, and the 1913 edition of the Funk and Wagnalls English Dictionary. I worked with these old dictionaries in order to include the older meanings of front, meanings that remain in other languages but are not so familiar in English. I was searching for how meanings have sedimented to create this concept.*

2. *In 2017-2018 I held workshops in Porto, Berlin, San Francisco, Brussels and Stockholm in which I proposed ways for participants to experiment with their experience of front, facing and dis/orientation. This writing is a mix of all these influences. It's the first installment of a longer performance/writing project on Front, Facing and Dis/Orientation.*

Chrysa Parkinson, September-October 2018, Stockholm and Berkeley.