## continent.

## code {poems}(excerpts)A project by Ishac BertranIntroduction by Jamie Allen

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When things get complex, as they may indeed be getting, the distinction between tools and the things that can be made with them begins to dissolve. The medium is not only also a message, it is an essential counter-valence to our own impulses towards the creation of meaning, beauty and knowledge. The tools we think we are using also use us: They push us around, make us think new things, do new things, even be new things. Language is no different, of course, although in its supremacy and ubiquity, it is even more elusive, difficult to perceive. The very words you are looking at right now are like compact little cryptograms—a written convention, talking back at you in codes.

Poetry is language speaking for itself. It is, at its best, where what is being told is coincident with the telling. The words written, or uttered, pop out at us, while in the same moment, constellations of meaning emerge; the components and its composition resonate, vacillate, on the page and in the air. Many of the constraints and styles of poetry we know have developed in order to allow words to express themselves, or show themselves as the mediation of a mental image. Programming languages for computer hardware, no matter how "high level" or abstract they are, are by necessity far less elaborate than traditional forms of writing and speech. But the structure and function of these new languages give them special advantage in clarity: These languages (syntax, sequence) and the results they produce (ideas, 'executables') are absolutely inseparable. By design, computing languages are created *in order* to express specific ideas, creating certain kinds of action or manipulation of other codes (data). In this sense perhaps, software is always, and already, poetic. It is precise description, and pure syntax—the signifier and signified—clearly coincident in the machine.

Ishac Bertran's *code {poems}* is an edited book project that exposes the materiality of computer programming languages. Here are presented a small sampling from a compiled book of poetry written by software engineers, artists and other code writers, "exploring the potential of code to communicate at the level of poetry." (code-poems.com) The project solicited for online, public submissions from code-writers in response to the notion of a poem, written in a software language which is semantically valid (i.e.: it compiles). This solicitation winds up revealing the inner workings, constitutive elements, and styles of both a particular software and its authors. From a large number of submissions, a selection of poems will be printed as a bound volume in the Autumn of 2012.

```
DAILYGRIND
import java.util.Date;
public class DailyGrind {
   public static final void main(String[] args) {
      boolean its_time_to_go_home = false;
      boolean away the hours = true;
      while (away_the_hours) {
         Date now = new Date();
         its time to go home = now.getHours() > 17
               && now.getMinutes() > 30;
         if (its time to go home) {
            break;
         }
         try {
            Thread.sleep(60000);
         } catch (InterruptedException e) {
            // ignore
         }
      }
   }
}
```

Paul Illingworth // Java

## UNHANDLED LOVE

```
class love {};
void main()
{
    throw love();
}
```

Daniel Bezerra // C++

TWOFACED

```
public class TwoFaced {
    public String greet() {
        return "Hi! So great to see you!";
    }
    private String think() {
        return "Fucking bitch.";
    }
}
```

Jason Kopylec // Java

```
DANCING WITHIN
using System;
public class PoemCode
{
   private bool dancing_within()
   {
      Boolean me = true;
      while (dancing_within())
      {
         var iables of light = "";
         try { int elligently_to;
         object ify_the_world_apart; }
         catch (Exception s)
         {
            int o_the_broken_parts;
            throw; int o_the_seed_of_life;
         }
         Random ashes_of = new Random();
         float ing_devices;
         short age_of;
         char acter_will_never_let_you = 'b';
      }
      return me;
   }
}
```

Álvaro Matías Wong Díaz // C#