



Reinforced Steel

A logo is a period at the end of a sentence, not the sentence itself.

—Sagi Haviv

Reinforced Steel is excerpted from a manuscript in progress entitled *Canada Modern*. These visual poems appropriate the corporate symbols of nationalistic marketing as typified by symbol-laden modernist design from the mid-1960s through the mid-1980s. Canadian nationalism was shaped in part by these clean, northern logos and the businesses which commissioned the logos maintain headquarters, locations, and services from coast to coast. **Reinforced Steel** swerves and distorts the 1972 logo of *Raymond Reinforcing Steel* as designed by Some Group Studio (above). Using photocopiers (ubiquitous in every office and corporate headquarters, used to multiply and reproduce the images and documents of corporations), the logos of this national experiment are smeared and distorted. What remains instead of cool modernism, are smears of oily residue pooling on the surface of polluted lakes and rivers. Corporate identities flow and eddy, distorting in sludgy waterways, leaky pipelines, and broken promises. Concrete poetry attempts to incorporate the tenets of advertising and graphic design into poetry, to arrive at a poetics which is extra-linguistic (working across linguistic boundaries, much like wayfinding signage in airports) while still being evocative (soliciting an emotional or intellectual response, much like the finest lyric). With **Reinforced Steel**, concrete poetry returns to that dialogue, fully embracing the work of graphic designers as part of a poetic discourse.









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Reinforced Steel — Derek Beaulieu

50 copies printed and sewn deep in a national park.

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