

Philosophy of the
SHIRT
by Arturo Silva
Jionji Press



*Read with your shirt off.
Write with your shirt on.*

*My father went mad; my mother won't
stop talking; my brother, well, my
brother...; but my sister gave me
a shirt.*

*And from that sensibilitous shirt
proceeded all other sisters: poetry,
the city, and the woman I love.*

*Though I have my blue dahlia, and
my great acorn, my raspberry is dying.*

*Shirts are a matter, not of design,
but of engineering. Further: shirts
are prose narratives in the third
person singular. (Poetry? City plans,
a total architecture: the ensemble
of shirt, socks, tie, etc.)*

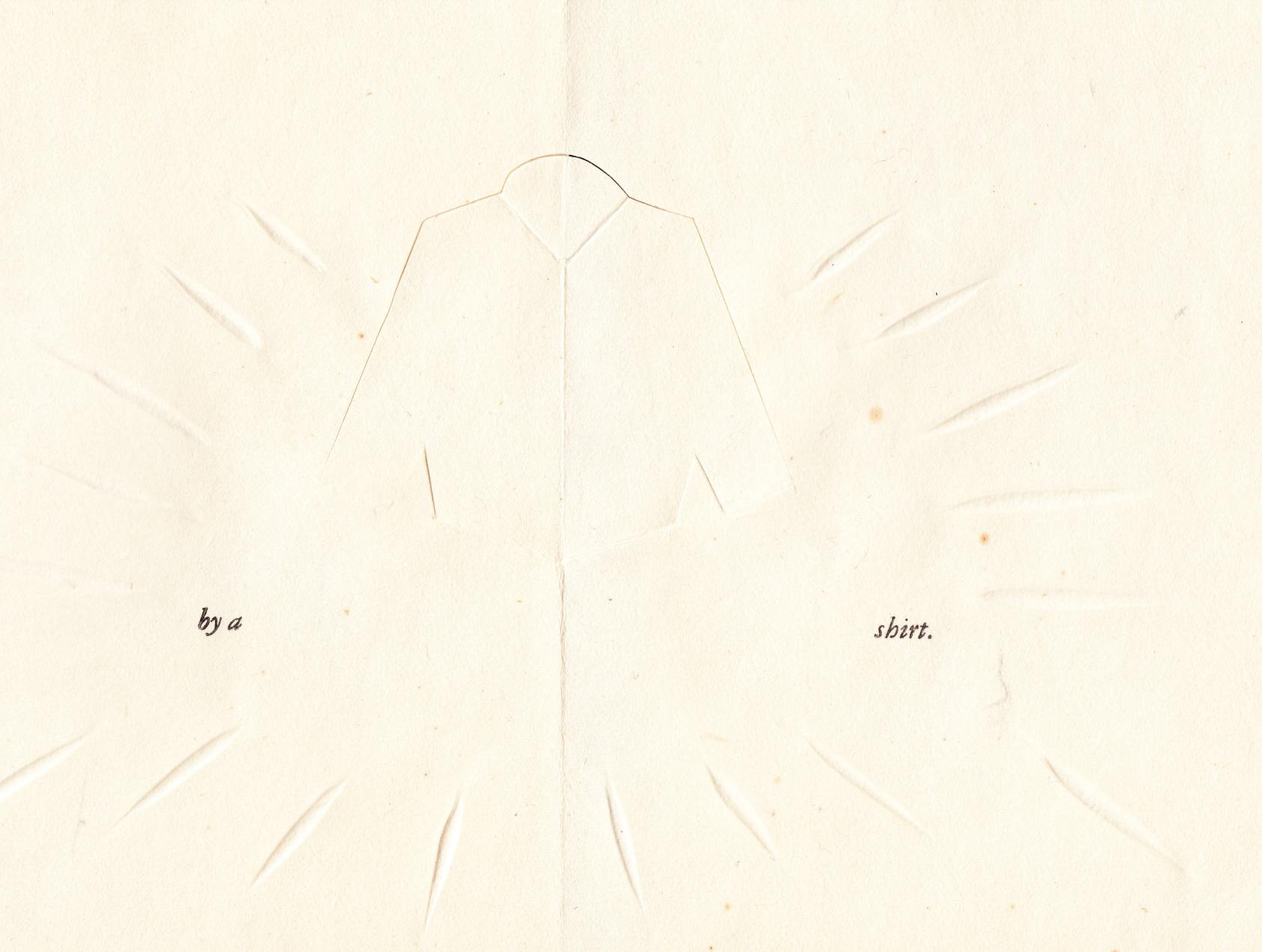
*What do I care for pants? I could wear
the same pair for a month; but I have
to change shirts at least three times
a day.*

*Our resentments our hairshirts;
the priest never removes his.*

*A year later, I revisited Zürich
solely to revisit a shirt store
(and to buy again the same shirt).
In my ideal city, shirt stores
would be open from dawn to sunset
(as lingerie stores would be open
from sunset to dawn).*

*I coveted a shirt t'other day,
and resented the responsibilities
that prevented me from buying it.
Or: thralldom in a city (a city
without a shirt): a week after payday,
and still unable—even, that is,
within the wide margin of a price
range I allow myself—to find
a shirt I can believe in.*

*Phenomenology, outdone—exceeded—
and brought down, by the final slap,
challenge: brought down...*



by a

shirt.

*The best shirts in the world are
made in Japan, and in Germany.*

*The Japanese shirt possesses all the
subtlety (of color, design), harmony,
and ease (superficiality) we
associate with that culture.*

*The German, on the other hand, is as
rigorous, direct, and perfectly
executed as we expect from a product
of that culture. (What do we know of
Kleist's shirts? Of Hölderlin's!)*

*But: the best wearer of shirts:
The Spaniard.*

A man's shirt; a woman's shoes;
a child's mood.*

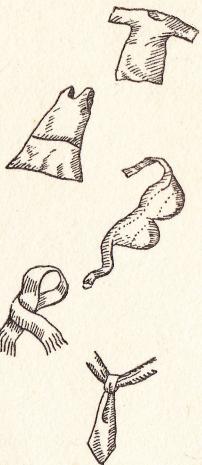
*What's the difference between a
blouse and a shirt? This: a blouse,
whether worn or not, always already
possesses all of its character.*

*(Though often then not very much:
haven't they become simply "tops"?,
ensembles mere "outfits"?)*

*But a shirt has no character until
it is worn; and then only when
it is admired both by a woman,
and by another man.*

**Her philosophy!*

Some shirts a



Some dresses an

Brassieres a

A scarf an

A necktie a

Whenever I have said "magazine",
I could very well have said "shirt".
With this difference, though:
I know how shirts are made.
(I.e., shirts, like magazines partake
of the order of Poetry ((But can this
be learnt only in Japan?)))

A woman combing her hair;

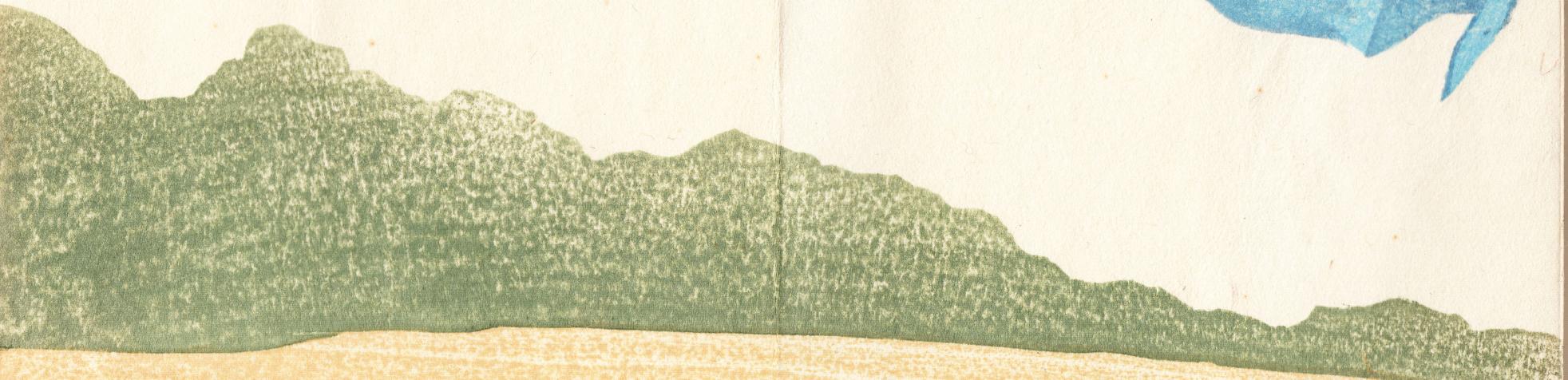
a man taking off his shirt.

A woman admiring her nakedness;
a man putting on his shirt.

*Paradise of the Shirt: the shirt is
the closest we come to a (re)union
of the sexes. A shirt, properly made,
chosen, and worn, possesses all the
grace, sensuality, and ambiguity
of womanhood.*

*A man unaware of this (his shirt)
is kin to a savage unaware of
his destiny.*

*Death of a Shirt (a fitting end):
my favorite shirt was blown off the
line in a typhoon.*



COLLARPHON



"Philosophy of the Shirt",
printed on Tanaka Handmade
in 16-point Garamond Italic
in an edition of 222 copies,
was designed and printed
with woodcuts done by,
Richard Flavin
and the type composed by
Arturo Silva,
during the winter of 1985-86
at Jionji Press in Ogawamachi.
Both artists wore their workshirts.

Illustrations © 1986 Richard Flavin
Text © 1986 Arturo Silva

This is copy No. 79

*Arturo
Richard Flavin.*

heart-pocket

