CARL ANDRE's abstract sculptures helped define Minimalism in the 1960s. Yet his monumental oeuvre of poetry, no less pioneering and prolific, has remained obscure. Now two forthcoming projects promise to reassess the artist’s practice in all its material and conceptual complexity; Tate Publishing is compiling a comprehensive catalogue of Andre's poetry works from 1957 to 2000, edited by curator GAVIN DELAHUNTY; and a major retrospective of the artist's work opens next spring at Dia:Beacon. In anticipation of these landmark events, Artforum has assembled twelve poems by Andre, published here for the first time. Introducing this exclusive portfolio in the pages that follow, Delahunty argues for language's primary role throughout the artist's six-decade career, offering new terms by which we may understand the radical innovation and narrative experiment of Andre's poetic enterprise.
 counties
red wine
pat club foot
pat queen
plain hanging
like a tree
white space
white curtains
bar room
sweet faces
black eagle
ambiguous wood
red epistle
shore fiction
private screening
everlasting arm
black recreation
rush daughter
weeds rainbow
room tibetan
blind timber
old boyhood
delicate floor
clay matches
pukey crowns
transparang shades
free samples
pooled mouths
manhattan rose
hair shaped
fresh lines
lunatic spades
chinese drop
grass jail
spanish prisoners
white fish
guitar sticks
constitutinal trony
hand job
shoe job
fish fish
blown gold
blond venus
oral cells
cold blue astronomy
false forgery
lincoln road
the high hat
red square
congressional calendar
arrows preferred
two out of three
amazed bull
unacknowledged legislators
manual futuristic
raleigh's beard
brown whittling
QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE QUEENSBRIDE
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DIRGE ON MONTEZUMA SLOWLY

Mexico, sides, before, day, parts, nothing, enough
this, cease, city
Montezuma, grief, him, him
come, him, words, lies
terms, said, war, alive, die
him, people, war, Mexico
darts, arrows, them, him, him, Lord, us, Lord
name, Cuilhuacan, Ixtapalapa, through, dead, power, desired, before, them
duty, stones, head, leg, food, it, not
it, dead
him, soldiers, him, father, at, was
Mexico, person, subdued
dead
Christian, wounds, him
Lord, Cuilhuacan, Captains, dead, die, him, it, was, us, king, sons
Mexico, so, dead, city
dead, chieftains, prisoners, shoulders, Captains, death, death
truth, stones
dead, him, this, ceased, fury, us, Lord, Idols, king, Montezuma, burial
stones, arrows, places
WHITE MEN
CRIMSON CROSS
ON THE
SETTLED BY
TERRITORY
VERY LARGE BLACK
COAL-BLACK
& HIS HAIR IS
NO RIGHTS WHICH
MAGNIFY THE HAPPINESS
BLUE ATMOSPHERE
CLOSING FIELDS OF
THE RED ROSE
FUN FINCH THE
WHITES & BLACKS
HUES WHICH MOCK
SO BLUE LIPS
THE GOLDEN HAIR
A LOCK OF THEM
IN A BLACK BRAID MET
HAG SHE TURNED
FROM WASHINGTON
UNDER LIEUT ISRAEL
GREEN A DRAGON
GREEN MARINES
IN THE ARMORY
BROWN IS DYED
HIS ROSE WREATH
THREE BENEATH
ARCHED THE RAINBOW
OF THE PROVINCIAL
GOVERNMENT OF THE
ARMY IN CHIEF
BROWN COMMANDER
OLD OSAWATOMIE
BY THE BLUE RIDGE
BEEN DAMMED UP
THE GAP THROUGH WHICH
CLOSING FIELDS
ARRANGED & COLOURED
RED WITH RAGS
WHITES & BLACKS
COLOURS THE SCENE
THE RICHMOND GREYS
SEEMED TO BE BLACK

Carl Andre
13 Willoughby Ave
Brooklyn 3 NY
ALTHOUGH CARL ANDRE is best known for laconic things—obdurate sculptures made of metal or bricks, laid flat on the floor in symmetrical configurations—he has also made an art of words. Indeed, Andre is a prolific poet, and his poems have always played a crucial part in his work, their brilliant investigations of text and pattern making their way into exhibitions, extremely rare editions, and citations. Yet the poems remain largely unseen and unspoken to this day.

For his written contribution to the catalogue for Kynaston McShine’s now iconic exhibition “Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptors” held at the Jewish Museum in 1966, Andre submitted "Leverwords," 1966, a poem of four stanzas on a single page. The work is composed exclusively of four-letter nouns, paradoxically arranged in a format suggestive of "Lever," 1966, the sculpture he was exhibiting in the show: The multiple-word composition, beginning with "beam" and ending with "room," was in part a response to the 137 firebricks extending from the gallery wall, thereby proposing a way to "read" "Lever."

The presentation of "Leverwords" in this context announced the importance of poetry within Andre’s practice. But it also diverted the discussion of his poems away from their relationship with contemporaneous experimental literature and toward enduring comparisons with his sculpture. It wasn’t until "Carl Andre: Seven Books" at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, in 1973 that the true extent of Andre’s commitment to poetry was acknowledged. The ICA show inspired the first retrospective of his poems at Modern Art Oxford in the UK in 1975, an exhibition later echoed by shows at Paula Cooper Gallery in New York, the Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam between 1993 and 1994; a permanent display of Andre’s poetry at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, was assembled around the same time. In recent years we have seen noteworthy presentations of the poems at various galleries and independent institutions in Europe and the US, and yet a complete account of
Andre’s poems exist in a tantalizing space somewhere between the established categories and forms of poetry and those of sculpture.

Andre’s catalogue of more than one thousand poems has yet to be assembled.

In these previous exhibitions, the emphasis has been on the correspondence between the poems’ layout and Andre’s sculptural configurations. This interpretation was set early on by a number of critics who identified connections between both kinds of work, including seriality, geometry, self-referentiality (particularly to material), and the use of the whole space (whether room or page). Of the rolling verses in one hundred sonnets (1 flowers), 1963, Chinati’s associate director Rob Weiner notes that “the repetition of single words commands the page by forming a sequence of fields directly related to the ‘places’ created in Andre’s metal floor work.”2 In the most recent monograph on the artist, Alistair Rider’s thorough and illuminating Carl Andre: Things in Their Elements (2011), there is an admirable attempt to consider the poems on their own terms, with two of the twelve chapters dedicated to their examination. But the poems’ inclusion in a book dominated by Andre’s significant contribution to sculpture only reinforces the sense that their analysis is impossible without recourse to his three-dimensional oeuvre. Andre himself has remained resolutely ambiguous about the relationship between these two strands of his practice while drawing parallels between their processes of production, graphically stating that he “used the typewriter as a machine or lath or saw, to apply letters on the page.”3 This ostensibly innocuous juxtaposition has forestalled discussion or analysis of the poems beyond a visual arts context, effectively silencing their poetic voice.

NEVER PUBLISHED BEFORE, the twelve poems presented here will be a revelation to many.4 Spanning a period from QUEENSBRIDGE QU E E N S B R I D G E, 1958, to TTTTTTHHHHHHHHEEEEEEHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH