

OPEN HOUSE

1.1

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Editors: Cosmo Spinosa, Houston Donham

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Open House is a biannual journal of poetry and poetics. We seek to collect innovative and experimental work of many focuses and subjectivities. We are drawn to poetry that maneuvers away from categorization, complicates expectation, and keeps us perplexed. We are based in Oakland and in Tucson. For more information, visit openhousepoetry.com.

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Tom Trudgeon

VCR 1

becomes with the
idea to name

where there
are branches,
land also

the activity
that generates
no profit

even the most
basic reduction

is an abandoned
image

VCR 2

the
construction

of valences
through
our ability to
see or

even our
most guarded
language

what would
you rather
have?

skimmed pictures
as if

empty
informations

aren't without
emptiness

VCR 3

if resemblance
is a series of
imitations

for us as we
drive down
the street

pointing at
buildings
like photos

in a cruise
brochure
alone

VCR 4

at night the
area of syncopated
grasses is
floodlit

not unlike it
means

T e s s a M i c a e l a

Since We Were Talking About It Anyway

A man kisses another near a window. Other people are talking. Other people are not talking. It seems to me that it all depends on the point of view and the conditions within which unraveling occurs.

It's a situation in which light hurts. And so we found it natural to be assaulted by memories.

We accept the opposition between day and night; we do not oppose the emptiness of being. We talk to ourselves.

The crowd arrives between the safety of exhale and the electric current. The rain as we spill downward takes a corkscrew or a wrench to undo.

And our organs don't like to eat as much as they once did.

I forgive them, having come into this emptiness unprepared for the sudden loss of the invisibles. I forgive the invisibles, too, for their departure. After all, we know what it is like to be quickly deprived of where we once were.

How often I've wished not to be here, where the waves are not.

And we are not ourselves, not inside this death of the night-bed. We are ourselves as much as we can be, having normalized the not-what-we-would-have-wanted.

It seems to me a man kisses another man near a window. I watch them and, having never spoken to either, love them.

Among the crowds are defense tactics and dust covered organs. Potentially useless ones.

We get hypnotized walking quickly towards a destination. We are responsible for everything and arriving too late. Merciless. How downhill exhilarates still, never mind the stinging rain.

Mostly, I like the privacy. I like the mischievous forms. No need to mention it is not-what-I-would-have-chosen. My organs are covered in dust. Where are yours?

It turns out even before it was clear what this was all about, it was about wanting to want but not wanting. Is it acceptable to believe in cohabitation?

What are facts, anyway?

Remember riding through the dawn in the open bed and the mist rising? Of course you don't, but it isn't your fault as much as I'd like it to be.

We are unfortunate in our fortune.

That which has wanted failure wraps a cloth around the forehead as a practice of containment. It seems to me I love the men that kiss one another near the window.

Presume a reason. Perhaps there is none. And so reason is no longer resourced.

It seems to me I know habits and electric currents. I know a thick, succulent knob. It is next to me and covered in dust. As my cunt is covered in dust. I want to want, but I do not know how.

In dreaming a hand between my legs. A hand between my legs. A hand between my legs. I hand. I hand. I have hands.

One morning I wished to throw myself off the thing speeding down the hill, stinging rain. It's indecipherable, now. I cry in public then go home and it is still true that I wanted to throw myself off, to break an arm, to get caught in brambles. That I wanted pain as a way of shaking off the dust, of waking the skin.

This is mine. This is an ending point. A self may as well be a surging up desire to let go of the dusty, untended moorings.

We have a few facts. There is a fact of spirit. That we have. What our facts have become.

A self seems like a good way of thinking of what we are and who we are and the essence of being. Forcing a self to pay attention when a self thinks it might want to leave.

And still we are always at the risk of becoming worthless beings. Rather, an understanding of the potential of not understanding. Animals need their armor until they don't need their armor.

It seems to me I love near the window. And we know desire and departure are not simultaneous, so we remain inactive. What failure wanted does not have a table.

There are other ways to cover up. They occur in reluctance to and having said yes but still not wanting the hand between the legs.

Potentially, our uselessness is enough to determine.

That which failure has wanted, wanted us. It seems to me I learned to love near the window.

And so we found it natural. And so we found it natural. And so we found it natural for night to oppose its day and day to oppose its iridescence.

All I've Eaten are Wings

Intrinsic to any value system is a list of what is excluded: an elaboration on getting up and going away. There are many life circumstances in suggestion.

Importance is a fluid thing, as are digestive aids and kinship.

This process includes removing strings from what once seemed necessarily strung.

I arrived with a back pack and a pair of red socks.

It includes taking what at the time seemed occult and removing more of the circumstances. Sternum my sternum, sternum my sternum, a dream of flying.

Circumstances of feeling one way or the other. What is a feeling, anyway?

Back then, I was working to forget names as to remember the particulars. This was an unreasonable request, but because it was done silently, I can neither confirm nor deny its effectivity.

I'll say this: I placed value on the act of departure. I felt ashamed in the light and I placed value on the act of being understood. The same pair of red socks unworn.

Which pair of red socks was it? I've started opening all the drawers in the bedroom, but nothing red appears.

There is the doubt that most of us know what it means, this being understood, in more than a generic sense.

But I had been warned of a tendency to leave. It was said in a menacing tone, and I was indeed, shamed. I felt ashamed as I left in the night. And still I left in the night. I did not leave when anyone could see me.

I stood near the oils cans wearing tiny hairs, the tiny hairs standing on end.

Should I feel ashamed about talking about myself like this?

The waiting for someone to arrive reminds me.

It's made me think, now, of the light behind the window.

I promise it will be the last time.

The window where strings were played.

Having returned to outside the window, this is not a new place to have learned. It reminds me.

Suddenly a stoplight turns red.

The word suddenly is a surprising one, don't you think? By surprising, I mean wrong. It is the wrong word.

I feel shame, certainly. For better or worse, it is loud in this room.

I didn't notice until I made myself notice.

It is loud. Marvelous ways to remind oneself of what one doesn't want.

All I've done today is write letters to the sky and to a few colors.

But then again, it seems reasonable as I'm taking someone new to the floorboards.

That's what I said then, when there was sensation at either end of the spindle.

I hate to say it, but there is still the emptiness beneath my sternum.

It's crept down to my pelvis.

The pelvis is a continuum of bones.

What to do with the long separation between then and now? This is an actual question I'm asking.

Also, I wanted to say that glass moves as fast as water but we know this is an act of disbelief.

I know the window was meant to be shut, but it is not.

Needless to say, it is raining again.

As it is raining I carry evidence of disappearing, but don't show anyone, so there.

Things change, things always change. Not our faces necessarily, but the trajectory of our stares.

I dreamt of a changed city by the sea.

Should I feel ashamed by not currently possessing the ability to code myself in other names? I feel shame, certainly. I feel shame every time I write the letter I.

At a certain point it is no longer clear who this is. Not that it has ever been that clear to me. Me me me me me me me.

No one swims in this city I dream of. The people walk and it is not so hard to come by packaged meals. The authorities keep tally on electronic notepads.

I told someone I had been dreaming of them, but I hadn't been. For better or worse, it suddenly got loud in that room. Suddenly is a dishonest way to say relief.

Watching the face, it was just a thing to say. I keep saying say, but I'm not talking.

All the ways to be warned not to let the dribble out. Leaving behind marks, any at all, and I am, indeed, shamed. I felt ashamed leaving, night or day. Cunt covered in dust or penetrated while sleeping.

What it might be like outside without turning to the open window.

What if it were raining. What if the hands were metal and did not shake, or come close.

These are actual questions I'm asking.

This is the problem: the recently departed don't sleep, but all I can do is sleep.

So much moving beneath the feet but the feet are not moving.

The night itself is a cunt.

Exceptions: if the receiving object was soft. If there was also wanting while sleeping.

These are not acceptable exceptions.

The city folds and refolds around some tenderness, some steel.

If I could say what the hands meant. If I could.

Something else I was warned against.

The river lapping on the stone walls and the chemicals bubbling on the surface of the river.

When I walked to the abandoned train bridge I threw glass into the water and wanted to kiss a bird-woman.

That's what I said then, but not to the relevant parties.

Nevertheless, it is still a factual statement.

What is a fact, anyway.

I've been thinking about how we are animals but we've overtaken those parts and how we've all made the mistake of letting someone else do the walking.

I like to say that, so as to feel less ashamed.

Dear red socks. where are you?

I am not usually waiting for anyone, so I am not reminded.

I let the body respond as if it were not solid. It is solid. Shall I say again that I feel many things and that I want to strike them all out.

Perhaps irrelevance is something to believe in.

Since We Were Talking

It is unreasonable to assume that one might know anything suddenly.

It was not sudden that one invented a bird-woman feeling unable to walk away and wanting to. It was hard to get going, then. As it is hard to get going now.

What to do with the long separation between then and now?

One is assaulted by memories. Many of them are from before this. One is not prepared for the sudden arrival.

A man kisses another near a window. One loves him and one loves the man he kisses. One do not wish to speak to either, for risk of feeling rising up thru the neck.

What is a feeling, anyway?

It turns out even before it was clear what this was all about, it was about wanting to want but not wanting.

Other people are talking. Other people are not talking. We talk to ourselves. This is another situation in which we find it natural to be assaulted by memories.

It was not sudden that we began to eat less then before. Nothing makes any sense, looked at from enough angles. This is not a sudden fact. Facts are not sudden. We are not facts.

We forgive ourselves, having come into this emptiness unprepared for the sudden losses.

What our facts have become.

There are ways we were warned and ways we could never have been warned enough. One loves near the window, and it is not your fault. One simply loves near the window. Simply is the wrong word.

M a d i s o n D a v i s

Dear Messenger,

i am hungry and the gospels are thriving. steel structures in the act. how we use great paradox to kill the view. from up here, made again and again against the atom. i am having trouble. i am new and already i cannot see past the doorways. this morning the noise. scaffolding in bright colors being born. steel structures in the act. having trouble. dear messenger, how far from the scaffolding can you reach? flames up to the edge.

these purposes between mornings are pulling
at the edges already on fire.

dear messenger, contained in the steel debris is the beginning. i woke early and received the beginning of your message. i have worn a track into the earth so furious it began to retreat. dear messenger, have you seen the digging i have done? dig against the beginning. the whole of it begins to give way.

Dear Messenger,

i pace a track into the earth that shows through available. today the dark. i stop pacing in order to hear the earth recover but there isn't much time. these are not steps i am making but they are becoming themselves. again and again against the beginning. the wind is starting at both sides. bend at the knees and wait. i dig fiercely into the beginning against the rain.

this morning i came to stand and thought it necessary to relay into the infinite that somehow a beginning has stood and with it an edge. dear messenger, nothing is coming and i haven't much time. pace against the atom. enough faux pearls to sound a cliff. the first few are poison. i take the steps between myself and the dark as breakfast. i cannot promise you that i have not imagined this space as simple architecture. the pace of the uncovering is slow. another step. dear messenger, do you know where they lead? i need to tell you, i feel compelled to take them.

Dear Messenger,

i am hungry. the noise has become distant or rather has been buried within the structure of my stomach and i am no longer waiting. the sound here has become a new sense of height. steel structures against the atom. dredge the sound. i know that i have begun to need and there is no calm here, just momentum. the sense of a wind having just dispersed. the edges on fire even down here. there is no one coming and so you must know that the distance is wild.

there are few choices in the darkness and i am not a hunter. dear messenger, if you are able please connect again my hands with my lungs so that i may not linger.

Dear Messenger,

in a moment of stepping i found that my resolve waned and the possibility of simple inhabitation crept in. to slow the pace of the end by existing between points. dear messenger, an unbearable chill. even now, my knees revolt at the idea of delay because the noise follows closely behind and even in its cruelty i find some comfort in its culture of surface. this wisdom of the surface growing distant.

i fell between the steps and a night was released so certain that i could not convince myself otherwise. i was told against the beginning was going home. or it is possible that i built such structures for myself. remember. gather into the basics of fear. the agency at the surface. above me lingering.

i have practiced the appearance of urgency in my stride. moving fast against the atom. this morning the steps became available. the slow pace of dying over and over against the atom. there is an expanse. a toll that i cannot read. dear messenger, are you watching me? i am not sure how to pay for this and there is no one to ask. am i to be buried? i cannot read what i owe. i can no longer imagine the fields.

Dear Messenger,

i am no longer hungry but i have no proof. we should find a name for this place so that we can begin to feel the edges. the only color here is birth.

the surface is just a blind imagining of all those moments we were alive when it began to rain. the air is soft. to breathe it is certainly a trap.

lay down godless. i say aloud, *we don't even understand our spring*. a faithless evening. keep the sound of it as far from me as possible so that i may know that i am guilty. a careless bundle. dear messenger, you can take apart the beginning, i will not be leaving as i have entered.

the bones are on display but what audience demands it?

Tyrone Williams

PhaTabuLouis IquaX

No worsted for the hoodwinked wearer cringe-slumped under ABC appliqués

A Blind of Thumbs

Her hands were not hers
to hand out, much less
to herself, least of all

to the lower case
of a third back, unarched,
if anything, the opposite,

however off-handedly,
a first person, singular,
if not single, leaning

back into her, my,
if not mine, hand
behind the back

legs of a chair,
or two, hands-crossed hands
set, at best, to clap,

worst, pat (however passed
the point of clasp), near impossi—
no—opposable backs.

Jesús Castillo

Variations on Adonis

I will call this city a dead marionette
and call America's shorelines mournful wolves
(A bird or a sky perhaps
will be born from the naming)
And I'll call the desert sun an oak tree
Perhaps the sea will wake and become a child
or the dream of a child in whose mind the future buries itself

There's nothing left to clean the cuts in my voice
The crowds of bystanders will pass
and light will come in its time

There are monsters in the water like there are
monsters in our dreams

America, I am confused each time I wake inside you.
 You invent addictions.
Are you a high-end graveyard or a child?
 I see your children dragging their brains along.
 Why no sustainable gods?

You wear a different face to each atrocity.
You are ununified and surging.
 Are you just gluttony?
 Are you civilization's slow grenade?

I am confused each time I'm swallowed by your doors.

Turning the pages of the gluttonous age,
under a netnerved sky.
These are my steps.

Taking warmth from loved ones, steadiness from clouds,
spending all of it on winter.

When the day's quota of hope is drained
my night begins in earnest.

The city blends with the swivels of my eyes.
I drink for the dead flowers and the ones planted
in your words.
I blend our laughter with the lamplight.

Is there in your wars a child for my paradise,
you merchants of safety?

What old joys you've drained from the evening.
Did you forget the ruthless
furnace of the world forgets no one?

I am slower than the sky and too much in my thoughts.

The inherited greed is in the bones. Should I seek
shelter there? Do bones give refuge?
The ocean's brilliant water shards at noon say death
is no use.

During the decades I lived I ate of the sun
amidst metal trees. I died an unfinished life

Consumerism, with its dream of absolute safety,
buried people in its eyes
and exhumed people from its eyes
People became sand in its contraptions
and glass became their dreams

We walked in the glare into days of disorder

I spell out a constellation which I hang
from sleep's ceiling.

There I continue
my courtship with nighttime

while the strings the country tied itself to the world with
catch fire and sway

K a t e R o b i n s o n

from Cunt Teeth

7

i have to throw
to sting

where the home follows one around
the skin around
the self the spirit of appearance

the outside layer and desired shelter

but there are other ways to say yes to open windows
a clear path to the wind outside
a clear path to the uncertain

the open window, though, the crevice to crawl through as well
a clear path to nothing but a way out

desire an endless wind
an endless breath on the skin
an endless tunnel out from

8

while participating in this dialogue with all of cultural mysticism i felt fixed, trapped in the reality of suffering turned inward

“to exist is to know suffering”

as if this knowledge could somehow absolve the bearer of the transgressions of culture

transgressions against roles

transgressions against power

transgressions against normalcy as such

a space carved out of open space

almost as soon as we
 were on the bed he
 had my pants off
 and i didn't stop him,
 but i did think "whoa, buddy!"
 but i didn't stop him, or
 even say anything as he buried his face in my cunt.

even though i'd previously thought "oh we'll just make out,"
 but there i was naked
 on his bed, i'd even taken off
 my shirt and bra myself, as
 he went straight for the belt and
 his face between my legs tongue
 flicking all around, no arousal, but pretty
 quickly approaching orgasm
 because i'm easy
 that way and as i'm climaxing i blurt out "i'm coming"
 as one does, as a woman,
 one must make sure
 her lover knows, even if she
 isn't particularly enjoying herself.

i always hear about the woman who
 can't/hasn't ever orgasmed, but
 never about the ones who come easily,
 the ones for whom an orgasm is indicative only
 of prolonged clitoral stimulation.

doesn't even need arousal.

that night i orgasmed without even getting wet.

anyway, i said "i'm coming!" and then i did.
 and then he stopped.
 and as he traveled up my body to kiss me he said "did you come, baby?" in a cutesy voice
 but i still sucked his dick before i said "i don't want to have sex."

he said "oh, yes, you're too tired."

and i was disgusted with myself for being there.
 for not giving all the information.

but i think i miss a body next to mine
it's the easiest thing

i feel like a violence sponge
what i mean is that i can't stop reading accounts of violence against women, large or small
i stay up until 2am reading a comment thread of accounts on reddit
i feel unaffected. at least in the immediate emotional sense. i know that i care deeply, but
i'm not made sad by these accounts.

they're feeding an angry beast inside me

the next morning i'm vibrating.
old man moves away from me on the bench waiting for the train
BART cop stalks down the platform

on the other side people wait
arms crossed
legs crossed

the old man reads from his kindle

i get on the crowded BART train
balance my notebook on my arm and keep writing
while gripping the rail by the door you shouldn't lean on

i find my head listing towards the rail
it settles on something
sharp and i jerk away
looking up to determine the offense

an engagement ring.

the train stops and the doors open and people don't move to let people off the train

25

allowed to wander alone
with the guard trailing you
basically alone

an essay on savage
i just tend to follow things
maniacally

the swallow cycle → like little red riding hood

a manuscript field recording
and the wings keep spreading
light walk out

he said
to put
the shallowness
and inside
the perpetual
idea of

if only we are
memory
if only we are
a story
if only we are
hopes and fears

in the background
is all the work
you made before
you became a
poet

glue things to the wall

temple of time

that she would then
latch onto
this mysterious map

mysterious mother

i feel super intact these days if not solitary.

from *Born Again*

After twenty-nine years of life I realized that what I had been suffering was given yet another name by academics: Kundalini Syndrome. I used to describe this sensation as severe dissociative symptoms coupled with brief manic upswings followed by unrelenting lows. This, of course, was a self-diagnosis. Kundalini Syndrome, however, succeeded in describing the electricity in the air before the storm, so to speak. I am able to trace back the early onset of Kundalini Syndrome to the first time I spoke in tongues when I was ten years old in West Minot Church of God in North Dakota. I loved The Lord passionately and whole heartedly, so when my time came I went to the altar and relinquished my entire body to the Lord as instructed, and elders came to lay their hands upon my body. I began to feel the deep, ecstatic sensations typical of Kundalini Syndrome, as well as the awareness of energy discharges, or currents, flowing through my body, which trembled so uncontrollably that I fell to the ground with tears in my eyes and spoke the love language of The Lord. Often times, now, I experience this sensation first, as an insatiable hunger in my astral body, which can only be satiated by discharging the energy through intense cathartic release.

Lusty blood shed hard on
Impaling clitoris factor
Aimless crying wreckage
Binge drinking happening
Drunken customer service agency
Endless death song searching
24 hour youtube journey
Buried panic attack bruising
Deep internal wave surfing
Blacked out violent bottle breaking
Waking bashful mutilation thirst
Morning shame walking
MDMA orgy tiptoeing
Whiskey in bed shame caving
Looping masturbation phantasms
Recurrent third thing night terrors

I submerge my hands in ink and smear them across the wall

I cover my body in rich purple paint and rub against white paper

I place a sticker of the Virgin Mary on my bedroom window next to the fire escape

She hurts with the glow of blue frost

I race down the stairs to make snow angels in the dog-piss snow

Fill the silhouette of my body in the snow with marigolds

Seed the blossoms with tissue paper and douse them in lighter fluid

I set them on fire and strip off my clothes

I watch the sun set

Like Francesca Woodman, I photograph every rendition of myself

With stones in my pockets I am lead to the rooftop

With a voice in my head thinking

Make spiral formations with the rocks

Channel aliens by shouting a line by Spicer into the tar sky

Say the stones will soak up the moonlight and be used to heal what is broken in me

The Watchkins were an animated adventure series released in 1987 with the intent to instill Christian values in young children through entertainment. Somehow, my mother acquired the cassette tape and we listened to it over and over again on a road trip from Minot, ND to Madison, WI. From memory, the lyrics to the theme song goes, "There's a Watchkin watching you so be careful/ There's a Watchkin watching you so beware/ Cause a Watchkin loves to watch/ Everything you say and do/ oh-oh-oh/ Who's watching you?/ The Watchkins, that's who's a-watching you!/ Who's watching you?/ The Watchkins, that's who's a-watching you!/"

There are little corporate elves that stand behind dimensional glass with crayons

Writing operative equations as they observe a girl sexing with her bare hands

The eyes of the Lord are in every place

The shade at your right hand

The shadow of your mind

Undulates, continuously in orbit

Floating at the rate of exchange

The elves are parodic of my distraction

What is my desire but to collapse

Into the body that produces

I speak of the third thing in the room
Prying voice from owed bones
Cradling a body confronted with her own transgressions
And bashfully shamed
Oh lord, I want to be lost in the body of you
I want to frolic through the city like a maenad
Do ut des, ask and you shall receive
She was asking for it
Oh holy retribution
I have gotten what I had coming
I will get on my knees and drink your blood oh Lord
Blood of Christ, Eucharist drink and refresher of souls
I will be slain in the spirit of you
I will be drunk, oh lord
Oh Lord, I will be sweet and drunk

Christy Davids

[faint]

inhale swab smell
cleansing rubbing
alcohol comfort
like spilled gasoline

[moves]

expansive circuitry
clotting narratives

of sanguine personality
blood and springtime

coagulating circuit (or)
vector for infection

bloodlines and hypoxias
mixed-blood and historicity

[feint]

he wiped his dick of my own
blood / hand transferred invisibility
to his self / don't see colored lubricant
erase my blood of you /

[faint]

banded by blue
rubber tourniquet
I balled my left
hand into a tight
fist as if on cue

S a r a h M e r k l e

from “diaeresis”

day one:

to be faced with introductions or a restatement of intent here we have
wandered and found *it* there is something beneath a muffling and a creaking
mimesis of *scuttle* or an aptitude to lounge we become these in moments of
expansion or restriction of breathing room there is less to breathe now
but it is warmer and we expand softly under flaking plaster

day two:

it is easy we are snoring but our mouths are not open there is practice in
collaboration our tongues brush lightly against cobwebs and there is barking
we are something unlike a family but still reaching *i want you on your back now*
we inhale the falling dust and our lungs chew vigorously on the particles of
each other that hang around sullen in the bottom of an aging cup

day three:

there is work to be done and we do not take it lightly but still you rest your
head on my belly we are constructing mythologies now around an earnest fist
and there is anticipation before clenching these moments jiggle and we
say *god* like *cunt* or *i am so happy to be here* but it is empty and
everything in the quiet between an aching ceiling and a hollow
foundation

day ten:

here we find concrete byproducts and reasons to voice complaints the expanses
of your arms or the feathers on your chest i am cushioned beneath
and oink lightly into cotton we are inhaling still and there are memories
you move yourself to nostalgia inked and opening these are things that matter now
like the distance between cracks and the hard copies of audio marked
strictly for no one

day eleven:

these are preparations: the shaking of a doorframe a steel pot drained of
mildew a package of mutual sustainability we dissent respectfully
and feverishly create content that reflects something more like skyline we
are made horizontal or gaping the nothing that was here echoes
loudly: *it took me so long to find you*

day twelve:

to mask our faces the understanding of parade or mysterious tendrils today
we are matching our insides to be dressed in intestine and opening ourselves
into livers there is sweetness in frozen bellies and the kindness of
other attractive creatures we walk quickly and keep our faces turned
away from the sun

THE LONG NOW 5 (NEKIYA)

Eros sounds like errors. Sappho said
it sweet and bitter, said the war
inside is love. She doth rive me
and did, from vegetable, from anima
my feminine other: still here.
Behind me in the dark, my psychopomp
my shadow, ferry me unworldly
under.

 Fallen love forgotten leaf
for knowledge to arise
 from memory
to see upthrough
sunward light.

 Here coming out
into day trailing just a catalogue
of ones left for dead at an edge
facing forward in the upper air
I shed my skin.

 Every seven years I wander the clock
no living altar to arrange deities upon
satellite's gone little pin of light
 in the sky little salt
 gone out of my life.

Still the prophesy sings
the head independent of its body a corpus
imagined in language intermediary.
You and I are tethered to this like animals
like the moon drawn to its planet to its star
the invisible rope of poetry passing through us
every fortunate blissfully damaged one.

THE LONG NOW 6 (PRAIRIE PRIMEVAL)

In the season of wind each hour
unwinds into tawny waves.
This vermilion erratic stone
puts a fire in me and so I leave it
 to the elements to little devils
who inhabit its periphery. A diminuendo
fails despite the calm plains
 fields grasses stones.
The Corps of Discovery found clockwise
here, found an awayness, betweenness
and weren't welcome on this semi-sacred
mound. I can explore here too
can grieve or grind down what
memory still wrinkles at the edges
 winking no, haunting; a
devil's low end strung, bowed, piercing.
What's lost is never truly gone not
excised nor appropriated by eminent
domain.

 My theme is change
Ovid begins I am one of the changed
most inwardly so glacially
moved and left like deep bass notes
inside the body leave through your feet.
 Merriweather Lewis knew this
when spirits allowed him purchase
atop that wind-lashed mound whole herds
of buffalo cresting the river's bluff.
They'll find all our bones one day
find that hour's chime too anew.
This clock enearthed
 these 10,000 years
 this now its own
 historical record.

THE LONG NOW 7 (WORKS ON PAPER)

Jettisoned the I was foolish then
to think the we gendered and be-
trued into union could fill this
illogical field.

I opened so darkly endreamed
a kind of life like the totality
of human history.

Too much life pressed into paper
too many gods in books
and too little sense in it all.

To grow from richer soil foxglove, lily-
white, cotton rag in the enjambed
future, I learn a loss.

I am an other as much
as any of you and can't make
a metaphor of it.

Inside the void a clock still runs
its orbital gear ticking away frail
memory This inadequate response
is a repose, says "go ahead. I dare you to
shape-shift, slip into that dress, a black
and aimless persona."

There is no getting away from demons, there is
only understanding the narrative
they are characters in The moon is
the story of a face in different light it's you
and anyone else reflected in it you feel de-
light when you think toward its gazing back.

Eros even in a smartphone's message
from a white city works into a lustre
that lights up my face then your face
receives it.

I understand small revolutions, how things turn
upon their own centers it's all too centripetal
it's mistaken for moving away from
what love was when fabricated or revealed.

Infinitesimal increment of time no chime

Jacqueline Winter Thomas

Naming

I ask if words can serve as transparencies
but only from this place, page
or air.

It makes one sad to linger—
to say: *river, stone, boy,*
tree.

River turns into another, coaxed
by stream, separate current. Stone becomes
within you star.

And boys grow old or burn
like trees, first branches, leaves, the flimsier
things—then core.

Consumed, as we are too, undone
by everything outside. And left to naming,
call it knowing.

Lines after holding a river-stone to your chest

the reflection – not the light
as in water, in a well

where a face might be, if it were
where a sky might be, if it were not

+

instead the ashy taupe of some en-
closure, where sleep falls in-

to us (as light falls from a sky), or light

+

into a well, falls twice, on-
to reflection and not light

Lines after reading Tranströmer

that our death already lies in wait somewhere within the body

true, we cannot speak but still night stands
against the sky and does not know that it is ending

we wander corridors all our lives and come
just once outside to see the stars

the stars, which seem to say—
the only signifier for your life is silence

Elizabeth Baber

When I Find That Words Leave Me
Adaptation of Nick Flynn's "Sudden"

If it had been used in the attack, the newspaper

it used the word massive,
inside mountain range had opened *her, but instead of finishing*

terminal, suddenly,
in an empty room. The telephone
fell from my shoulder, a black parrot repeating
something happened, something awful

*we could be orphaned
as she grew smaller, wiped under moon,*
we could have

how said good-bye. But it was sudden,
overnight

e world became a bell we'd crawl inside
& the ringing all we'd eat.

might have been a heart attack, the newspaper

in

massive,
mountain range had opened
inside

in

na

suddenly,
in an empty room. The telephone
fell from my shoulder, a black parrot repeating
something happened, something awful

the
asked

we could have

said good-bye. But it was sudden,
overnight

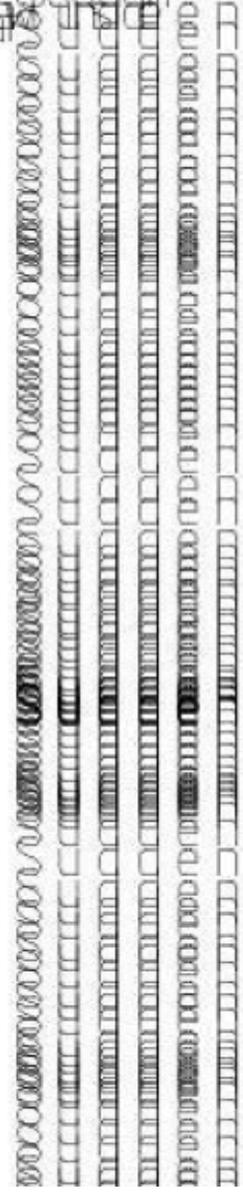
became

a bell we'd crawl inside
& the ringing all we'd eat.

inside massive
mountain range had opened
suddenly
in an empty room. The telephone
fall something happened, something awful repeating
we could have
said good-bye. Sudden
overnight
& the ringing all we'd eat.
a belly we'd crawl inside

mountain range had massive
inside
in a memory of the
something happened something with
we could have
said goodbye Sudden
overnight
& things at withdrawal

insich, mountain range had massive,
there has been a... something awful... repeating
catching up by... & the... all we'd...
... ..





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J o s h u a M a r i e W i l k i n s o n

The Easement

Icy water is turning blacker
& the porous stars are jealous
of the dead one's voice, held
or sustained in the memorial video
a friend made to call us past
the casket or gone flowers.
Whose music can we get right with?
Nobody from below?
Whose wet story wants in?
So it was mine.

The Easement

A kitchen match could keep me warm
here in the gossip
alive with shades lingering
through the phonebooth on the hunt
for a vendetta to obviate
unfold & set as a note
on the tortoise's back—
not for a soul to find but
for its author to rid himself
of the birds in his unwired chest.

Joseph Massey

Scotoma

There's nothing sun
doesn't gouge

at this hour, from
this angle, even

speech, the
thinnest phoneme,

sinks beneath
it, becomes an

imprint of
an imprint

in a wide
ruin of light.

House at Night

after William Gedney

Stranded
by speech, nouns
twine to amplify

the asphalt-kindled
dark.

...

Who isn't
inhabits the house—

the husk
of what wasn't

where a lamp-lit window
hangs.

...

Sidewalk crabgrass
collars a fire hydrant

collared by street light.

Gnarled cactus
in a pot on a sill.

...

Silence is revision

of silence, the sound
of a paper cup

dumping shadow
over a curb.

Northeast Regional

Windows take dictation.

...

Shrub streaked yellow
(late September)

freaked ragged
from a cracked-concrete web.

...

Mattress half-
submerged in swamp
water hedged by bent
guardrail and
cattail grass.

...

White graffiti
on chipped brick
wall
vies with ivy.

...

Flooded trench
beneath razor-wire fence—

an algal mat attached
to a shopping cart.

...

Silo,

silos.

In this room with you my mind abides

a need
to not need

to speak

White curtains lace
together

morning's attendant detail

(the drowse
and drear of it)

You remove the room
from me

swallow circumference
into your center

centered into mine
Isn't that the dream

to leave
language
behind us

leave it there

wherever we were before we entered

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