

LISTENING
for
EARTHQUAKES



JASMINE
DREAME
WAGNER

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for
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Runner-Up, 2011 CAKETRAIN CHAPBOOK COMPETITION

ROSMARIE WALDROP, *Final Judge*

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CAKETRAIN
[a journal and press]

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B L A C K S W A N S

It has been written, is written, will be written
That the first rule is that there are no rules; nothing is forbidden

All that has happened is happening now
All that will happen has happened

But what of our poor view of what it is to see
If all we have to see has been seen

If all we have seen we will see
What of our bifocals and contact lenses

What of our cinematographer
What of his union pay

And what does this lack of love do for the image
Baby, I want you to be all mine

Baby, baby sweet baby
Since you've been gone

Listen to me, unknown unknowns
Image takes no shape other than its own

An image that changes the image also changes image itself
As an image elevated into a stadium alters the stadium

As an image elevated to a wing
Is the process of an image coming into being

And *being* is a domestic creature
Cage-free and grass-fed of image-seeing

O white sheet
On the brick wall of a general store

Elevated into the constellations
Baby, I want you to be all mine

Since you've been gone
Since you've been gone

Now listen to me,
Unknown unknowns

Because we love, we are pickled in horrors
All that has suffered is suffering now

All that will suffer has suffered
As an image elevated to its concept

Is an image curdled by its past/future context
Keys left in mailboxes

The radium girls, their cool mint fingers Timex-blue
Chimneys, spires, steam pipes, satellite dishes, equivalent and unconnected

The tollbooth unmanned
Its song of minor traffic violations

Because we love, we conscripted this innocence
Are we strong enough to strike our own matches?

E X H A U S T

EXHAUST blears the sand on the underside of the acacia, the
umber side of the umbrella, the yellow parchment, thistles slicing
the tarpaulin. We drive to a place and perform for it. We clatter in
caravans. With cameras we graft the buffalo to the impala, the dik
dik to the oryx. Our elands spawn hyrax, genet, civet, serval.
Gazelles ignore us. Become contortionists. Consult thesauruses.
Expend their whims, weave, bow. Topi break into couplets, vervets
scrape under crownly tomes. Dusk peels back a sky dark as an
amethyst. In the crust, I spy a warrior. He extends a spear to see
how deep the water, how strong the torrent. A native woman
cradles an unknown object. I'm spooked. So are they.

C H E C K S A N D B A L A N C E S
H A U N T O U R O R G A N S

A pencil break, retirement,
adjacent monuments. As if history
stuttered brothered objects

sunning to be ventilated and released as mud
dries, desires to be brick on all sides. As we wish
to be useful as leaves are new. To be felt

as sun on a rug by a lover's cat. To be silver
deer in moonlight on a hospital lawn
and equally as quick. These things are the same

thing as heaven. Otherwise, the crowd
would be empty space. The camera's shutter
cuts the little gods out of each of us, and tomorrow

when the album splits its pages into anterior
and antecedent, objects will be likened
to spirits again. The odor of cough syrup

on a napkin. Each written confession
further from its transgression but closer to coffee
as the venetian blinds sample the sodium

streetlight in measured portions. The room's
shadows, like sentences, tell it slant. Listen,
someone inside is about to explain

in present tense, as though understanding
context ameliorates rift, as though meaning
adjoins to echo in the operating theater:

the nurse washes his hands again and again,
untangles gold chains of stitches
as a bar code scanner at a checkout releases

my belief in numerology.

There must be a reason why
this dream of the nurse pursues me,

if I could shame its keys to my hand, I would
never misplace them again. I might patent a method
in which digitized bells and whistles apply

myth's adhesive to the instant replay
of my mind in my fist. Like a prizefighter
downed in a corner, the future

isn't what it used to be. Its wet dog trembles
in the autumn wind, its day-glo poplar
curtain parting like the scent from potpourri

that with luck and thrift outlasted
the transplant of its origins. Proof
that hunger endures a body,

then shifts. Our great tectonic love
digitally remastered to stream at a faster frame rate,
and in its gestalt, somehow, I see my nurse

better now that the towers rust together.
Gray light will come and plait the room like a skirt.
I won't recognize dust, even if it asks the right questions.

I won't fast-forward to bring the runner home,
or a distant helicopter spectacle
to the tiny shuffle of envelopes

where a smoke tendril spirals into a peacock's tail
above a rock crystal ashtray. Already, I know
what will remain with me like fuzz

on my knees after I have stooped to retrieve
something he has dropped, like a lancet,
or an atlas, or a drum stick, and I pause

the playback long enough to consider his wrist,
its contiguous pulses, how somewhere in an arctic forest
there is a warm clump of earth for each of us.

G R E E N P O I N T T E R M I N A L M A R K E T

Follow the yellow line to
the yellow weeds in their
yellow ditches: gasoline,
one rosebud match to spark and
burn like a television.

Paranormal glow of the
Citicorp Center, aqua-
marine of a caged parrot.

Ruin is a cultured pearl.

Rain comes as requirement.

Requires we submit to
its loose, fluted memory
fluttering like a receipt

in the incision, human-
colored haze in the hollow
sector. Iron sleeves of drain-
age where pigeons in wire-
less slate skies return to roost,

lucite-winged moths narrowing
beneath sodium streetlamps

dim

as the maples in the park

turn

on—

Sleep without memory, our
ruin.

Past deferred from becoming
passed, from emerging legend
in the foreground of trauma,

ruin itself, traumatic.

Its fingerbone begs us to
unearth its contusions from

corridors of lightning-singed
Christmas holly. Ruin is
forensic, identity
as many forms of erasure

as preservation: coin-toss
distribution of spiders,

dandelions in bluegrass
where bulbs of black brands curl from
milkweed sown in sow-thistle:
waxmyrtle coils, smokestacks

titanium light has cursed
with specificity, each
raw wire, each cinquefoil
chrysanthemum equally
alight in terse, unrehearsed
testimony that marks their
place as *site*.

—from the northern
whirlpool of Spuyten Duyvil
to the southern breach of time-
lapsed barges' haul, the Narrows,
the East River under gold-
leaf, rippling, oil-steeped welt
coal-thick with potential, its
pillars of pyrite, jagged

skyline hazardous with zinc,
cadmium, thallium, lead,
benzene, silver, osmium,
nickel, carbon monoxide,
sulfuric acid, rubber,
asbestos, arsenic and
fiberglass—

—from the open field to the
curtilage, to the tag-pocked
hull, stripped with chemical wash,

from desire to rumor

from dynamite to fiber-
optics, from arson coeval

to vagrant, to armed guard, to
hex, to diode, to copper-
barred bales of synthetic knits,
polyester butterfly
collars, silk crêpe ruching, shirred
crates of marjoram rot

burnt—

In the end, a fly dies as
flies die.

Our rust, not our fear
configures the elements.

Ruin is a misspelled word.

Our ruin comes second-hand,
like clothes.

Radium buried
in an ingrown nail.

Footprints
like neologisms we
cannot reverse.

Ruin is
a cask of flies.

Neither dead
nor alive, the mass.

In the
end, a fly dies as flies die.

When a body moves within
ruin,
the body becomes
the impasse within its core.

The ruin becomes a cask.

The body becomes a cask.

All that becomes,
becomes a
cask.

All that becomes,
becomes
a core.

Ruin is not meant
to be amplified,
though it
is bought and sold as more,
more.

When a body moves within
ruin,

the body becomes
remains.

Not meant to be named,
a body is not a name

for a body is not meant

to be covered.

Ruin is
not memory,
though it steeps
its ward *in memoriam*

more often than not.

Ruin
is *naught* and *knot* and \emptyset ,
as
ruin *should* and *could* and *ought*
and when in the scabbard of

kite and *cot* and *caught*,
is wrought.

Dust filming the lung of a hepafilter. Clotting the blades of a white plastic desk fan. Red lettuce leaf, heirloom tomato. Cloud oil, cider vinegar. Satellite in a stone statuary. Drywall between iron pylons accreted along McCarren Park. Meridians of cathedrals cached under glass atria. Asterisks. Camels along the Dead Sea. Bauhaus. Dried mackerel strung from coarse hemp twine. Green vireo born with one bent wing. Cellular transport. Cubed Styrofoam. Charcoal.

L I S T E N I N G F O R E A R T H Q U A K E S
I N A S H A D O W Z O N E

The moment the brass button
vanishes, the lemniscus
of lemon root turns leitmotif.
A white towel dries on a hook.
In cirrus, sycamores
loaded with minutes. A blue orchard
sinks its anchor and steep.
A name for a zipper is closed to the soul.
Trapped in a room of red sand. A blue
pill capsule lifted into a train
window becomes a lemon
the way wind in lemongrass harbors
blue light. The way a rifle
smells of pink snow and tobacco.
The way howls affix ravens to
glyphs. Given Lepidoptera, Lepidoptera
dehisce. Given index, a desert
aerially strafed. Given alphabet,
a gray flag of rain, a tenement
strewn through it. In a life,

one pours milk
into a crystal vase, naked
as a number. In a life, pines
devour starlets. Sand
whipped in a hurricane
lamp. Given forgiveness, Lepidoptera.
Given forgiveness, black mulberry
lipstick scrawled
the flight of cranes in a train window.
A church organist pens the word *parasite*
on her wrist. Maples blow
into orange cysts. An autistic
predicts the fall of an ice pick.
By the time words have been liberated,
books will know the absence
of books. Will know white
annuals. Uranium tailings. Bullfrog eye
clotted with maggots. In a life,
a lime, a rivet. A camera
tucked into a spine.

IN ALTITUDE

IN ALTITUDE sickness, in crinolines, in pens that dry fast, in vertebrae sinking into foam. Doors creak and bang shut along the tiled hallway. How many forms can doors take? Gasoline, envelopes, goats along the lane where we eat roast goat and buy blue beads and army-green watercolor camouflage paintings where girls flare like cigarettes and scatter across the canvas. They meet the gun at the dance. They shake all night, they shimmy with switchblades in their knee-highs and make their way home by the light of a Maglite. They duck into stony rooms, killing spiders with their boots. Ants willow through the rheum to cart away the honey-laced bodies. We walk on stilts through their cities from midnight until morning. How many bodies, how many doors?

MINOR MIRACLES

How many men
roll roulette?

How many women cast
broadcasts spiraling from the city
like light from switchblades

as if a network could form itself
from sky if it had enough
desire to imprint itself into being?

Who will write the manual
How to Save a Man from Drowning?
If love is an uncommissioned earthwork.

If light is careful embroidery,
if the pencil shavings of stars
are the tracks of animals

cast from pages of storybooks
in confetti from yesterday's birthday,
who will sing the songs

of immanent objects?
The sand belongs to no one.
The box store employment applications,

the billboards gold and turquoise
like all that is human
in a motel at twilight:

cigarette burns, the clay colored carpet,
a man's suit jacket hung in the closet.
On the boardwalk of desire

how many ring
the soul at the desk?

M E T R O N O M E

The moon is an peach
and the sky, persimmons.
Clouds wash up
on the beach—
or are they Styrofoam
peanuts? I warble
like Gershwin,
into a can. My professor
of geography asks me,
how can you have
a river and an ocean
in a city? Where
are you standing?
Someone says, *ecumenical*.
Someone says, *plaster*.
A girl with acetaminophen
stashed in her pockets
devours a black and
white cookie. After class,
I climb Mt. Rainier

and Mt. Rainier disappears.

I skateboard

home. Outside my window,

the laundromat whispers,

Sparkle Temptations.

I tie my curtains in knots

but keep them hanging

to occlude the tattoo:

the sky is persimmons,

but not really.

All I can say is

more red than blue.

T H E R E I S N O P A R T O F T H E B O D Y T H A T H A S N ' T B E E N P I E R C E D

Blessed are the ego mules, for they are shod with their own lead.

Blessed are the muckrakers, for they will fork the Milky Way from its gravel
to delight in the gravel.

Blessed are the red beep of backing van, salty crinkle of amnesiac
radio, crow squawk, clear whisper of HVAC, for they contain, at once,
the variegated grasses of now.

And blessed their nonharmonic intoning, for blessed are the radical, the anarchist

prostitute, insurgent
motorcycle, unhinged trapdoor of a tarantula's oubliette, a fight
not to forget one's silk net longings.

Blessed are the tattooed starlings and nautical insignia, for beneath them,
only water.

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Blessed are the executives, for they rise, cyclic, with the sun
and will not know the surety of a wingbone
pressed against an eggshell
and will set.

Blessed are the politicians, for are they not unlike an eggshell.

Blessed are the bankers, for they are starving.

Blessed the egg of a heady swamp, umbilical gar, spun sugar
cottonmouth maw, for they are not unlike
the fog that cloaks them.

Indistinct

seep of habitat with no beginning, no end.

Blessed are the firecrackers, cherry bombs, snapdragons, for they are
the waterworks, sweaty palms, calendulas of sudden vision.

Blessed are the stars, for their asterisms

give earth its philosophers.

Blessed is the sun, for it gives
earth its feather headdress.

Blessed is the sun, for how is it not unlike a feather headdress
on a mule, a Milky Way, a red beeping, a silk-bound door
tattoo leading down into the firecracker wingbone.

Bless the manic sun, for how is it not a stoplight, an executive.

And the moon, for how is it not a purple thistle
exploding in the rain, and how is it not the sun's
campaign for better living through electricity.

The epidermis unhooks its canvas and tugs, for beneath

the starlings and shooting stars, there is
no blood, only grain.

The epidermis reveals its blank page
like a prostitute, for tender needlework can whittle purple thistle
whistling from a gravestone.

Ambulances are foaming, bless them.

Muskets of cattails with hunting caps, bless them.

The obese, the obtuse, the large and awkwardly-shaped,
they wade in shallow water, bless them.
And bless the tiny, the shrewd, the scrawny,

anorexic and grim, for they have persisted in a wooded thicket.
And bless the purveyors of TiVO and 5 AM long-distance,
for they have taught us to moonlight as secretaries of shorthand endurance.
And bless the clover-picking baby with the cleft-palate, may she emerge
from the bassinet ambidextrous, with swans for hands.
And bless the gossips, bless their colicky violins,
wet and pink as roast beef in their vertigo of infancy.
And bless the hail on the tin roof, screech of a March robin, dial tone,
for is not the return of a familiar tone
a memory of a tone
in all of us
the farther we live on into ourselves,
the farther we look back onto ourselves,
the harder we have to listen, so bless

each peach, each nectarine, each apricot pit, each fifth metatarsal of each left hand, for the light
of a star never stops but travels until it rings
in its sweet dark center.

Place a penny beneath your tongue, taste the green almonds, bless them.

P R A Y E R I N P A T E N T L E A T H E R

For the candle,
intact

For our backs which tender
the dome we cleave them

For the trace element deer in the taffy wrapper, doe
we knit in our hoop

For beer-dulled we share with them, gratitude sparking
with asp-colored vacancies

The age of the whinny beg
the god with vision rhyming for a nail
and the ash brooms sourly dozing
on the soldered guardrail berth
How pollinated cars
How game or semen or drain
How there is lighting spangling
cut things or hokum, dated or cherry

No family court slips or divisions of queue
in sleeves grow the rudiments, aces of men
to furnish the quarries of girls

For boysenberry hooks, an evangelical zipper
and dammed leaves' seamstresses that quail
and the mouse-dimmed quartered meadows
and the nap in the fiddle's dinner-mint snap
and the yawning cantaloupe we cream, failing hourly, melts

For every soaped fowl mourning rivet and rivet
and every sutured Dow hedge
and every sap-dipped moon
burning clover in its keep
and every sap-dipped moon
burning clover in its keep

WHERE MEMORY CRACKS

WHERE MEMORY CRACKS a knuckle, comfort swells to entomb the joint, and no one crosses, uncrosses their legs the way a railway fidgets. Now, I know I shouldn't shine a flashlight on the thorns of raspberries, but I invest in a structure an ability to consider me in return. To hold my shoulders beneath uncompromising plaits of rain. When even the sky defers opinion, files its papers, settles for less. Its disinterest passed down through generations of wobbly furniture. Shellacked and stained. If I could reinstate the grain, would memory hike its skirt? Carry me like a pebble in its pocket, wheel a hole, let me rain? By the time I ask the time, it will be too late. Digits revolve like children about a maypole. But oh! to be the one to shout *fire* in its spring-chamber. To be the tag sprayed at the end of the cave. The air inside, flammable as a fur cap. Unable to recall the animal, unable to forget.

V. I. LENIN PALACE
OF CULTURE AND SPORT

Place your mouth on my palm—

LEAD a thoroughbred on a leash, quilt a topological map,
then— grouse, knuckle, delta. Wrought bodies, heifer's maws,
tousled branches, then— *but a surface lives, it has been born.*
How what is known shapes what is not known, hued by a
palette of command: plate glass constrained by its own internal
friction. Its vice versa, the broken dishes, unlimited edition.
Beneath a concrete hull, a lone transistor winches an engine.
Beneath wormholes, their electromagnetic impact. The viola's
sour pink muzak. Do you know how sibilance grades, elongates
absences? Do you know how neglect bleaches a flute of its
process? As most words known aren't navigable roads. As most
words used are heavy metals, migration.

Taste my pulse, call it honeysuckle—

WHAT MOVES and what does not move, in heavy metals, migration? What desire to dagger downwards against movement against? Then seep into leech, into magnet. What is radioactive spirals outward. What is radioactive intends, as over, over again, contents resist their packaging. Ink blot. Milk spilt. Fireworks. A starling's yaw, a starboard zag, a getaway car. A vandal's black mirror well. A meteor, expired and expiring, in a coat pocket. Detected by a method by which our eyes are fruit no one can eat. By which our fruits are seagulls chained to a revolving door hunger, our deficit smelted to the moment's bloc. As, alone in the perfumery, the Rachmaninoff performs itself, a tomb-rubbing, a graft spelt. As, alone on the court, love of the same embraces the same. *Don't struggle. Come in. You're welcome.*

Yellow can be blue if we say it's so—

WHAT IS FRAGILE must break early. Some porcelain, recipes, classified documents. And lacquered mercury-chewed hat brims. And asbestos licks, tics of tide table indexes. As scribbles of lacquer and consonants remain. Some in a thumbprint as the whorl of days shirks requirements. Dandelions simper, offer themselves as their substitute sacrifice. Bald streetlights line up as though they were in a cop show. What proof: braille of rain on windows, pollen in a pool of piss? What cannot prove: hurled cloud, hinges of taxis and patience? Grain buckles a lens. Reverb suckles a bootstrap. One cannot lend audible depth to an ice cube until it begs, bleats water, and water cannot retrace its steps. Write the rule one hundred times on the dry erase board: one must count incrementally to thunder. But by the time time is understood, it is already too late.

For instance, the sky is a dandelion of church fire—

SO MUCH CEMENT, so many hedges, topiary, dips and blades to choose from. Canned feathers, candid camera, one is already behind a gate. Behind the plumage of paint chips, the remains of decommissioned holidays narrate *no entry*, as a broken plate can't narrate dinner. As airborne filigree can't orate an archipelago, even if every island is an ear, burning to rumor. What we learn from baseball can't translate here, where a float dazzles the flow of traffic the way an earmarked wing sizzles in a dish. We can bequest a wreck, but the gift is echo. Reflecting fractions of dividends/lemons. Even puddles genuflect in the primacy of representations. A box top on the stair where a holler was hijacked. A ribbon in a bow beside it.

In the stairwell, the echoing stairwell—

WHAT REMAINS after glass is a grave. As a shower drains, bile squeaks from a spleen, a stomach carries a grudge against silk. Bile hollows its troughs the way one uses a fork to pick cigarette butts from a blender. In the lottery of batteries, track marks and poppy seed confetti— In the lottery of hand-scored sports statistics, of words traded for branded names— In the lottery of being born again in the leaf pile— Of being the cause of our rejection of causes— Of gravity drinking our appendages into our withers, first as an act of magic, then ritual, then torture. Radio waves pierce us. We hear them coming. Is what remains, after they have passed, adolescence? Is what remains, after they have passed, analogous to *amber waves*? Who can remember what one wished on candles? What child's wish for sweets is manifested in a rage?

AND WHAT DRIVES

us to make love

or anything, really?

Dreams

of moneybags and goldbricks, era

of shipwrecks, your pirates swam to sand.

With what will

we tow ourselves?

Limericks? Marshmallows? Peonies?

Alone in the stadium, Love of the Game

and The Game

embrace.

—*Drive. Where to?*

Anywhere.

A N A M U S E M E N T P A R K
R I D E G O N E W R O N G

AN AMUSEMENT PARK RIDE GONE WRONG, a middle school orchestra performing *Pomp and Circumstance*. The end of a long vaccination. We argue whether or not we should lock our resignation, jump the trellis. Whether the universe gums the engine, whether we applaud when we make it our loss. This must be neither the “short plains” nor the “long haze” but some freak weather. Whether we are flooded and have to leave, whether we pack our rucksacks. For the needle, for the black-ribbon fence with a shrike on every other post, we collect seashells when we reach the coast. We prefer adjectives to pearls. Today we bottle water. Tomorrow, the fairgrounds— rained out.

RIDERDUST (THE FAIRGROUNDS)

* * *

According to the
renowned phenomenologist,
the river is flat.

vellum

vespers,
wrought-iron

Its movement contains
no premodern figures of
continuous temporality.

Its movement contains spaces
which are not themselves
anthropological

and which do not
integrate earlier spaces.

Nor do they promote

earliness
to the status of
cusps *memory*. Its movement

contains,
and someday some delta
will have this much more sand.

* * * —*if the river*
could give to you, could explain
to you in verse, could quote

could say—
a surface lives, it has been
born— then what

could I give
to give gifting
to you, my sound

I make with my hands—

as an aging expression gathers
a drawstring in a semismile:
This
 for you you
I would plot I would
to your plot, I would
ablate the spectrum of would, I would
rush, flash, whir, I would I would
a broken brown beer bottle would I
with the sound

I make
with my mouth.
The sound I make with my wrist,
unwound / scapula skipping
waves engorged by waves
lit red in the neon of the Safeway.

Do you think that crow knows
he's standing in someone's parking spot?
That a river knows a bridge when it
crosses one? That the two pieces of hymnal
music we found at the river's edge, one
folded & fled, one wadded as though
by a fist & covered with bitumen, do they
know we picked them from the pile of spent
Ernest & Julio Gallo, pitched them back in?
& have you ever pressed your tongue

against the river
in the middle of the night
in a monsoon?

I bet it tastes like
licorice

*catfish nougat with olive meringue
pungent halvah potstickers braised
in mushroom kelp tartar, pike nectar
carob cellulose sumac baklava
laced with norwegian lime resin
salt omelet, tannic soufflé, foamflower
mimosa with barberry flour
vanilla pigeon confectionary
plum lorgnette in carrion gin
flambé, hickory-smoked lion's paw
with apple-cinnamon radish,
whitewashed trout in antler milk
braised in a blizzard of kiwi lint
raspberry sherry
horehound candy again
carrion gin again
again
again*

No stone
makes of you

the sound you make when you laugh

(a wax bouquet with wire stem,
a moonscape organ unraveling

raveling

to velvet with the advantages of shades

to embellish homes of taste

with phantom maids

so today I walked the river in remembrance.

I walked to the place of the purple stones, sat
on the bank and flicked purple stones into

(
unraveling

the water. The water was the highest I've seen
and the noises the stones made were dwarfed

raveling

by its surging. The silt was busy with black
ants and casings of oak buds discarded, shells

lazuline blades

red and gummy stuck to my hands and left
little red streaks like cuts, the smell of waxy

laves, syncopated

cranberry Christmas candles and smeared dirt
in patches on my palms reminded me of the

chthonic

petrichor of hay and eucalyptus in California,
my old navy suede coat with red stitching,

caesura,

the dandelions larger than Sacagawea dollars

accrued, accreted,

bronzed, brazen, Byzantine

glinting, fast and yellow the joggers, dogs,
the unidentifiable insect I examined before
I left, its long pin body and folded window
wings resting right where I found the stone
with its center stained

like a geode, split

syrix of sward & kine
diaphanous, oceanic eyelid
frothing ice-white
lattice
all

in the time it takes

a snowflake
to melt on a wrist)) where

stones dark where
as plums along the icy
river's edge

where
in the typology
of national myth

where where

you must must

on the surface of water,
be calico. Cannot land,
cannot be forsythia, cannot

one yellow amongst reds,
not water, knows
of red water knows red

carbon. A crow, afraid
erodes. A fist of fir curls into

rust

a birch, pale as sandstone.

* * *

A birch, pale as sandstone,
erodes. A fist of fir curls into

rust

carbon. A crow, afraid

of red water knows red
not water, knows
one yellow amongst reds

cannot be forsythia, cannot
be calico, cannot land
on the surface of water.

* * *

What I meant to say was,
leaves

discarded two seasons ago,
gathered by crows.

What I meant to say
was,

black swans compose
themselves

where the crows
are wearing
vintage clothes

where

where

I hear the water raging—

I hear the commuter rail

*its garland of thieves, its carpenter bees
tunnel through wooden spoons strung from trees
hawk-hooded like druids, hooked / hooks
to dreadnought / herringbone / store-bought / whore whore
amaranth, flagellant / stray's phosphorescent / teeth drainage age
foaming / feral Christmas wreaths / foxfire speak
in telephone canopies, the indelible / pure cane sugar
scream of F-117s—
/ roam*

*as contrails / concomitant
practice restraint*

*ragweed /
cut diamond / hologram / river*

stutters / cuts

sultanic in the sun

the little gods

/ from us—

where pebbles pockmarked the slush I remember
where a sidewalk drunk with water I remember
had fallen into slumber. It was here I remember
that the path forked, one direction I remember
tapering into the paved and salted, I remember
where crooks of ebony trunks curved I remember
out of cracks in the asphalt, bare I remember
branches black and hooked as though I remember
the cracks themselves had sprouted I remember
and domed the deepening avenue I remember
Dead pines brushed their gray fingers remembering
against the elms' gnarled fists I remember
as the oaks snagged their neighbors' remembering
darkening vertebrae. Above the rolling I remember
marble of soot and snow, the natural mortal
world bristled in a skeletal glow glow
I stared up into the diffuse whiteness remembering
and saw that the clouds had grown sullen remembering
variegated in fluted shades like microcline remembering
feldspar where they jutted into the remembering
atmosphere, sunlight a lean trace of pyrite remembering
laced through the swollen opacity of the remembering
crystals— and at the base of the sky I remember
the rusted tating of a Ferris wheel I remember

The river's crumpled	The river bows	I remember
foil becomes less	like a thread of	I remember
a depth than a	ivy pressing	I remember
surface below the	against glass,	I remember
geometric eaves	pressing against	I remember
of the Doubletree,	the iced arc of	I remember
beneath the oak	shallow sand-	I remember
that hangs over	stone as if	I remember
the water like a	magnetically	I remember
coathook inverted,	attracted to	I remember
the buds of its	the ledge of	I remember
skinny branches	the bend where	I remember
about to burst like	the smell of	I remember
match heads into	sulfur hovers,	remember
green electricity	foaming	foaming

foaming	foaming	foaming
foaming	foaming	remember
foaming	foaming	foaming

COMPOSITION RETIRES

COMPOSITION RETIRES. The weight of a horsefly distends the canopy. The intention of the fly is to cast and bank, absorb flux and output seasons. Condense the hibiscus, make a tincture of it. Bake a biscuit of it. Abbreviate its myth. Its shadow is an elephant atop a prehensile cliff. Dark matter warps the warble in a lucite and gravel inlay, mediates memory with pistons and rank. Runs a warm gray bath to sanitize the gangplank, applies a local anesthetic. Fever afflicts the proper symmetry of the flesh of the conch. Black satellites mapping each bank of straw and hair and skin bend the tawny palm fronds in. Their fossils omit beginnings but fail to omit terror. The intention of the satellite is to survive, digest. Transmit.

LISTENING FOR EARTHQUAKES
IN BLACK WATER

a nightcrawler
must sense a shadow

jay flew the river until the river ran out

never reached

the source

once

thunder

followed a stream

to a point in the earth

where water swelled

watch

factory

paper factory

paper clip

airplane spoil

industrial soap

sanitizer

factory spit

toxins in

the aquifer

now

it storms every saturday

even milkweed
are missiles

desire
microphones

gowns

to sleepwalk
barefoot

silt

army of ants shell casings
of oak buds

dandelions larger than sacagewea dollars
glinting pin
yellowjacket

broken window wings

stones green
as grenades in
aspen blades

take spring, an even year

bricks blue at dusk

turn the throat of the
weeping cherry

* * *

× _____
RHODODENDRON, MARIGOLD

× _____
BULLETS LACE METAL LIKE SALT THROUGH ICE

× _____
AN ANOREXIC SUCKS A BLACK LOZENGE



× _____
CONVULSE IN BLACK TULIPS

× _____
PICNICS CARVED IN GREEN TABLES UNTIL CORRECTIONS

× _____
BEACON BOUNDS ITS PRISM ACROSS THE WINTER SKY



× _____
CHOCOLATE DOG TAG

× _____
DELPHINIUM MOURNS TAIWAN

× _____
MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR: *BURNT LAND!*

× _____
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SACK OF SCREWS



× _____

ICE IN A ZIPLOC BAG

C H A M P I O N M I L L

Variations on a field, Missoula, MT

there is a buoyancy to ice unencoded
there is a buoyant blossom in spectacle
no part comes naturally part is work
and the days work and the aphids
the telomeres and tentative wrist
a glass quality in them now
a glass quality in the snow
a windshield embedded with spectacles
bedazzled quotients of ice
a windshield withstands elements
blue windshield supplants a sky
hazed red with rumor smoky
clavicles of turbines
cavities design

hooks in the shoulder of a byway
old rumor unproved appendix
a buoyancy in the shifting gear
gearshift of manual transmission
in tape loop lupine cellophane
rumor backpedals down the highway
but what of drift of hint in shag and
what of green flies and what of redux
platinum sparkplugs and what of harts
of speculative fiction spooks coils kisses
and what of domain walls and monopoles
and what of the trowel used to contuse
this water to describe dance
as curve of pursuit

a surface of a sphere is an approximation
a wily chaotic hoop of flagpole
a chimney stovepipe gyroscope caduceus
a shipboard compass computer
simulation a rotating plate of dust
and what of tibia of china and what lust
and what of siamese we
all a bit live a bit must
the brass quality of the gimbal
the brass quality of dusk
and what of radar
analogous to duel
of turbulence
of rust

somewhere a landfill with its callus
of cold beryllium
measured wind with foil fan
rebar skewed to violet
somewhere a window painted pink
closed its ear
archaic torso of a mill
decorated like a war veteran
its red and yellow tags
black tape lip
mouth ajar lets
weather in
what would a geologist do
with a heart like this

blue is symptom of a deeper malady
two kinds of blue mesozoic pleiocene
neither intuitive neither dream
neither metacentric boundaries key
the violet blacklit landscape painting
its *nova totius terrarum orbis geographica*
its glittery theater of snowglobe
their fasciate obligate cartomancy
their theater of key with velvet rope
theater of scree of bruise of
wild unknowing wild
blackberry made bronze
by scarcity made barb wire
unable to uncrow

in deconstructing a minor key
in a popular book on an ancient world
from the hoover dam to cape canaveral
where do these stairs actually go
and why do black holes radiate energy
and why does this energy imply heat
and heat imply body and body
imply loss and why does slow loss
of heat suggest we evaporate slowly
and who does the black hole really love
and where does this aqueduct flow
and where do we store the silent
films no one screens anymore
and the end music why is it silver

go to field a periphery
go to a field with a friend
pass caricature paintings
past weed acrylic flint
and lay on your back arms spread
and lay in the black stink of park
earth convex against your harp
dirt flexed under mars
go without javelin corn or lens
and go without trial goal or fence
without the batsman will insist
without the batter will insist
and will assist
and will assist

what percent tungsten

percent lead

what lock shale of yellowcake

thread beams too damp to burn

pitch like a tent

somewhere a lack of firewood

strikes a blue match

somewhere a satellite seals

its mind cell by cell retires

its blueshift

sinks

in a drift

o what longing for drift

if there were no drift

N O T E S

The GREENPOINT TERMINAL MARKET complex occupied over three blocks of land along the East River between Greenpoint Avenue and Oak Street in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Built by the American Manufacturing Company, once the largest manufacturer of rope and jute in the world, the 16-building warehouse complex was later used as a storage facility for recycled polyester material and clothing. The Municipal Art Society of New York, the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, and the Preservation League of New York State were struggling to preserve the structure as a historic landmark when the complex burned to the ground in 2006.

As Moscow's inland location provided no suitable venue at which to stage the sailing event for the 22nd Summer Olympic Games in 1980, the USSR's Olympic organizing committee looked to seaside Tallinn, the capital of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic. The V.I. LENIN PALACE OF CULTURE AND SPORT was completed in Tallinn in time for the games, and included a concert hall, a heliport, and an outdoor park. The complex was later renamed Linnahall after Estonia regained its independence in 1990. Although the concrete building has decayed significantly, it is occasionally used for concert events. In early 2010, Tallinn Entertainment, founded by Ronald S. Lauder, CEO of cosmetics giant Estée Lauder, signed a 99-year lease with the local government to develop the structure into a casino.

The Great Dismal Swamp, a vast wetland area on the North Carolina/Virginia border, is known for its dense vegetation and **BLACK WATER**. Scientists believe the Great Dismal Swamp was created when the continental shelf made its last big shift. Native American legends tell of a giant firebird that nested there. Before and during the American Civil War, the Great Dismal Swamp was home to a settlement of escaped slaves who found refuge in the swamp's impermeable undergrowth. In 1997, Erik Prince purchased 7,000 acres of the marshland. There, he created his private training facility and military contracting company, Blackwater, which he named for the peat-colored water.

The **CHAMPION MILL** was a lumber mill located on the south bank of the Clark Fork River in Missoula, Montana. Just west of Ogren Field, home of Missoula's minor league baseball team, the decommissioned mill site was regarded as a symbol of the lost glory days of Montana's logging industry. The building was demolished and its surrounding area decontaminated and rezoned for mixed-use in 2008.

From "V.I. Lenin Palace of Culture and Sport," page 56, and "Riderdust (The Fairgrounds)," page 68: Discussing his departure from representation in his 1915 painting "Black Square," Acmeist and Russian Suprematist painter Kazimir Malevich said: "But a surface lives, it has been born."

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JASMINE DREAM WAGNER is an inter-disciplinary poet, musician, and artist. Her work investigates the hidden narratives of manmade landmarks: abandoned industrial areas, fences of wildlife refuges, decommissioned military structures, and exurban space that has fallen into disuse. Using a variety of mediums including drawings, ritual performance, musical composition, and texts including poems and short prose forms, Jasmine's work explores the shadowy pockets of the post-industrial landscape and the natural life that persists in the face of environmental degradation and decay.

A graduate of Columbia University and the University of Montana, Jasmine has received grants and fellowships from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Hall Farm Center for Arts & Education, Kultuuritehas Polymer, and The Wassaic Project. Her poems have appeared in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Aufgabe*, *Caketrain*, *Colorado Review*, *Indiana Review*, *New American Writing*, *Verse*, and *The Arcadia Project: North American Postmodern Pastoral* (Ahsahta Press). Her fiction has appeared in the *Seattle Review* and *Lost and Found: Stories from New York* (Mr. Beller's Neighborhood Books, distributed by W.W. Norton).

Jasmine currently lives in Connecticut where she teaches creative writing at Western Connecticut State University and makes folk and experimental pop music as Cabinet of Natural Curiosities. You can learn more about her art, music, and writing on her website: www.songsaboutghosts.com.

POETRY \$9 US

“In *Listening for Earthquakes*, Jasmine Dreame Wagner reveals how ‘terse, unrehearsed’ tunes of phrase turn one’s ear. Wagner’s ear trumpet is attuned to sites of aftermath and decay—the Greenpoint Terminal Market, the V.I. Lenin Palace of Culture and Sport, and the Champion Mill—if not to amplify decomposition, then as observing mechanism, transmitting a palimpsest / transmuting an impasse. Aglow amid the natural world, the remains spring memory, spin mnemonics as recycle gestures where ‘ruin is *naught* and *knot* and *ø*.”

E. Tracy Grinnell, author of *Helena: A Fugue*

“*Listening for Earthquakes* establishes its own unexpected fault line in the body of poetry. With verbal fire and range, the poems move easily between the sensual and abstract planes: ‘its loose, fluted memory / fluttering like a receipt / in the incision.’ The incision is mind; the instrument is language. Within the provisional play of words, the depth note of the eternal emerges: ‘all that has suffered is suffering now; a ‘green vireo born with one bent wing.’ All is at once timeless, sad, and to be celebrated.”

Paul Hoover, author of *Desolation: Sovereign*

“*Listening for Earthquakes* does listen—hard. It also watches, sniffs, tastes, and touches. The result is a series of extended love songs to the natural world, human products, and human-ruined landscapes. It has been a long time since I’ve read a book—a first book!—that takes such delight in the small, perfect image, and thinks about it with such measured yet delicious method. Endlessly inventive, dizzyingly luscious—these are the descriptions that come to mind. You’ll want to spend time with and in this book.”

Kathleen Ossip, author of *The Cold War*

Listening for Earthquakes was the runner-up manuscript in the 2011 Caketrain Chapbook Competition, as judged by Rosmarie Waldrop.

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