
Senior Projects Fall 2023

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THRESHOLDS

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Bard College

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THRESHOLDS

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College
by
Shannon O'Neill

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
December 2023

THRESHOLDS

Shannon O'Neill

I am often struck by the obvious fact that the other is impenetrable, intractable, not to be found; I cannot open up the other, trace back the other's origins, solve the riddle. Where does the other come from? Who is the other? I wear myself out, I shall never know.

—Roland Barthes

We have, each of us, nothing.
We will give it to each other.

—Carolyn Forché

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STANDSTILLS

The dreams turn all the same if left out for too long, and how
to strike the balance between letting go or clinging

white-knuckled to each day, March slogging
through the last of winter's snow on the side of the highway

to some lonesome billboard, sudden and megalithic, its appearance
enough to scatter even the mourning doves.

Pray tell, Spring, how to pick up the pieces,
this year's new winds blowing bangs off of foreheads

with no remorse for said foreheads,
steam rising from the hills with no heed for car.

This steam has never seen a car, and still
is so careless in its pursuit of sky, has no knowledge

of sap, clinging to the lip of the spile, remembering
what happens to anything that decides

to spill forth, a risky sweetness but a sweetness
still, the trees all huddled close, so close, speaking

amongst themselves— *how? how do they do it?*—
This is how, the blood caught in one hand

held below the nose, which is not enough, or is
but only until the end of the car ride, a brief holding

until a better remedy can be divined,
till then a purposeful delaying,

diverted gaze, a face
turned away from the eyes.

AFTERMATH

Obelisk of grief. For need of putting *something* into the ground. The aura grew hair. Grew legs and arms. There was this feeling— not fear, or sadness, or anger. Closer to casual elusion. As though riding the train next to a stranger. Eyes passing through the body though your limbs move to accommodate its space. Is the knowledge enough to manufacture presence. Or is the mind just sensitive to it. No evidence needed, just a flickering light in the kitchen and a number of questions asked in anticipation of wordless answer. How much do you *really* want to know. The voice box and its frozen tendencies. Your face slackened. Your unshowered skin-smell. Only warm thing in your icy bed. Like anyone else, you are apprehensive. Keep your gaze on your lap. By the time you got to the party, people were already dispersing in throngs. Rotating, levitating, around the specter.

CONTUSION

Nowadays we amble around the center
of our troubles. Roll their stems
against our gums. We lift ourselves
from the water. Our hair defrosts.
Soon, enough time will pass
that we'll find other names
for those sentiments: The heavy
dragging limbs, flakes of rusted metal,
the smells of rot, grass, bleach,
sunscreen, the world a chemical tang.
Our lives were those of cracked tile
and concrete, all surfaces grating
and drying the skin. The ground was hot
and dry underfoot. We walked
all the way home and back in the sun.

Since then, the scabs have learned
to crust and peel. In the next
town over, a bowling alley multiplies

its parking lot weeds. Grows, unthinking.

Late in the season, the heat still

will not let up. Bacteria begins

to breed. It's one thing to know not

to scratch. Another to feel the itch.

EDDIES

Out here, there are no warm-blooded lips. Only
shell. Water. After half an hour of slime

and grit under the fingernails, a crab
is unearthed, ready to bite. Rock. Hillside.

Like then: Being awoken by someone much taller
and made to face the moon, buffeted

by the salt air and further than imagination.
Hissing at light and touch before withdrawing

into the sand. Tetherless, a boat may go anywhere
the ocean pleases. No God but weather

and wind. Ripples drinking every mile. Hungry
as algae. Capillaries open. Barnacles

bleeding so thick any submerged surface
becomes a permanent scab. All wounds

an opportunity. Bodies stir
in late morning light while the rip current

siphons the breath.

CENTO OF QUESTIONS AFTER SPENDING YEARS APART

Do you know me?

Where are you headed, traveler?

Who's there?

Are you warm where you are?

Are you *you* where you are?

What is the opposite of devastation?

How does one decide when to begin grieving?

Where is the wind?

You were just pretending, weren't you?

What is the metaphor for two animals sharing the same space?

But what if they are poems or psalms?

You believe that?

What more do you want?

Can you see what grows along the lake?

Is it joy?

Does it dissolve slowly?

What are the symptoms of your sickness?

To place these flowers on or in the graves?

Could I help in this?

So soft, yes, but in what way?

ANIMAL FACTS

i. Beavers mate for life, though groundhogs don't, and one has been used as a name for the other.

ii. All sheep are even-toed ungulates. They can recognize the bleats and faces of every member of a large herd. They're also good at running.

iii. For wolves, monogamy serves a practical purpose, a singular mate making it easier to fend off advancing suitors.

iv. When asked about her entries in the 2012 Great Salt Lick Contest, farmer Kim Jacobs remarks "I think my cows do an OK job, but I really feel my sheep have brought it home for me."

v. Some animals are injured by cars while pausing to lick the salts that accumulate on a road's surface. Some animals remember what the other looks like.

vi. What can be remembered is eventually reduced to shadow, some kind of post-sentiment: The darkness, the heartbeat, the slide.

vii. In July of 2018, an orca gives birth to a calf that lives no longer than half an hour. She carries the body on her back for seventeen days afterwards.

viii. The light changes again. The ants follow their lines of crumb.

ix. Most animals who frequent salt licks do not mate for life, though *in Ohio, adult males and females associate with each other throughout the year and often from year to year.*

x. A photograph places the mineral lick in Sopot, Poland, dated January 1st, 2007. It is the driest thing— the palest thing— for miles, perhaps new, perhaps replacing a depleted one. The wooden base rises up as though planted, as though there is someone it can fool. Below, the understory,

briefly interrupted, leaves a thin dirt semicircle. A drop of soap in a pool of pepper. Preserved, it remains intact, ready to be necessary, waiting for tongues.

xi. In Norse mythology, the divine cow Auðumbla licks away at the salty rime of the cosmos for three days until Búri, the first of the gods, emerges from the ice.

xii. The gaur, up to their knees in mud, lower their heads to taste.

OBJECTIVITY

In the distance, the trees are such a shock of red
one might mistake them for flames, and beyond them
the mountains, surging and ebbing along the horizon. Here.
The snow is driven thick and heavy onto the canvas.
The pine needles drape like tiered skirts,
cascading downwards. Come spring, rapid snowmelt
will swamp the park. You'll paint that, too—

the sun reduced to a series
of stripes in the water. Birches tangled
and arterial. You painted because you wanted others
to see as you saw: Hills ash-purple after fire. Trunks
climbing into a smoked sunset. Death turns you
into a monument, all questions unresolved, shadows
running long and thin over the uneven ground. *Brother
to all untamed things of nature*. Suspended within the photograph,
you'll stay, afloat in your dove grey canoe. The tamed
rasping the surface of the untamed. Eight days
after disappearing, you'll be removed from the lake. Strokes of sky
roll blue-yellow-green off the edge of the painting.

2

FLIGHT TO HARTFORD

I used to fit within a circle of legs.
Upon outgrowing these design specifications,
I sought other forms of organization. I scissored my life
into several uneven pieces. Delighted at how each fit
when dispersed amongst a variety of zippered pockets.
Later, I would learn how often this starts
as a triumph and ends with an overweight bag
sent in the opposite direction of wherever you'd like
to be headed. On the plane, an attendant asked
if I was moving. Why else fill the suitcase such
that it couldn't be shut? Why hold onto what you no longer need?
Earlier in summer, I uncovered forgotten boxes
to find my belongings had grown fuzzy
in my absence. Pillows decorated
with childhood handprints, too-small
tee shirts, notebooks full of crayon etchings
gone indiscernible. All surfaces sticky, but with what,
I wasn't sure. I washed my hands three, four times. Dug through
the spoiled materials in search of their start. Cardboard, thin and wet,
split upon my touch. Love spurted from the side
like that surprise glob of ketchup which gets fired
out of the bottle only after you've smacked it
a few times, strange water and all. Some things cannot
be preserved. Do you remember learning to spell your name
and then practicing it everywhere, the world an artwork
only you had the good sense to claim? Below the cookbook's
Pasta With Meatballs, inside school desks, on the walls
before you knew they were preferred blank? I wanted to live
within my means. They had to check my bag
at the gate.
I had brought something
I could not lift
above my head.

TRUTHS

I'm always thinking
of you. Both of us dressed

 in our mothers' clothing.

So drop me a line. Last night

 I wandered through the place
 I used to live, made maze-like

and warped.

 There were rooms
 I had never been in,

 and impossible sunlight,

 filling windowless corners. These things

 the end of the hall,
 words,

 keep slipping away from me:

 what I was going to do
 two rooms

 & two minutes ago... I couldn't tell you
 what it might mean.

 To be fair, some dreams

 are easier to interpret
 than others.

There are

a couple guesses as to why

I'm always fighting
with my lover or flying
upwind.

Though one of these
happens more frequently

than the other. And

of course, when I'm in

my childhood home

it serves as happenstance setting,

never quite

the real thing,
details stretched and molded

to fit the mind's

every whim,

kitchen growing tenfold in square footage

but the flooring still linoleum, or vinyl,

I don't know which.

But the carpet still off-green

and scented with stale cat piss.

At least, in memory.

After a decade
of believing otherwise,
I find out that we never

really had any heirlooms,

only toy-store purchases
which my father imbued

with sentimental value and I

with my trust.

After a year
of seeing one another,
I realize you've never cried

in front of me, though that one time

I thought
you would.

Then again,

I struggle with refraining
from crying in front of people,

so in a certain way
you've got me beat.

What else can I tell you?
I come from a place of toe-breaking sidewalk.

From the bottom of the stairs.

I once had a bad streak of luck
that lasted several months to a year

where I kept accidentally
stepping in cat barf.

The truth

is I wish I could give you more.

I don't want

to tell you the tale

of when I grew longhaired
and brittle in my solitude.

My teeth cemented
into my jaw.

When I walked backwards
out of the night.

I am hard pressed
to even remember those wintered
days, shadows skulking
from one corner to the next. Instead.

Here is the one

in which I grew so big
and tall all my pants
turned into shorts.

Here

is where I had starlight
for dinner. I'm trying to tell you,

this isn't uncommon. This

is the brain I've been given

and these are the last
of my desires: Eating
something warm and saucy.

Buying silk mohair.

Putting Pangea back together.

Some are easier to obtain
than others, I know.

You can't just go ahead

and cut out the middle man.

Everybody

needs friends.

I thought

about them all morning.

LATE IN THE GROWING SEASON

Today I went to the farm in Kingston with Leila. The Dino kale was incredible. Someone that Leila worked with, Pat, described everything as “lush.” We agreed. It was lush. The kale that wasn’t Dino kale— I don’t know its name— was almost as tall as my shoulders. Looking every bit of the word “cruciferous.” Later, Mom texted the family group chat a picture of something Dad described as “a ghastly skeleton.” Her picture came from Georgia and his descriptor from Ohio. Pat told us that the lushness was also kind of overwhelming, that he was trying not to panic about it, to do what he could. “I’m operating,” he said. Bees of all kinds and sizes bobbed over every open mouthed plant. We picked several leaves of both kinds of the lush kale, an eggplant striped with cream and violet, and two beautiful ruby red peppers, longer than my palms, which neither of us could remember the name of. Admired the bitter melons. Ate stray cherry tomatoes from the vine. In the car, we questioned the possible spiciness of the peppers until finally I took a tentative bite and found them sweet. I hadn’t known my mom would visit a museum, or that she’d find a skeleton “cool” enough— her word— to send a picture of it to the rest of us. The next time we will all be in a room together will be November. “This wasn’t here when I was here,” Leila said. The crops were starker and taller than memory, than the spines on the skeleton. “Lush” was the word for it.

ALBEDO

Roughly one in five children have a persistent fear of the dark after the age of four or five. Still, having passed that point, I would sit awake in the hall, armed with a pillow and a book, playing sentinel until felled by exhaustion. Other nights I would tiptoe my way to my mother's room, path illuminated only by the glimpses of night through her windows. Sound turned me to stone. I learned the noise of a body turning over beneath comforter, of deep breathing turning short. At times there was no square of floor I could step on that wouldn't creak. For minutes I'd stand, trying to discern if her sleep had gone shallow.

In winter, snow would oxidize the sky. Motionless, waiting to hear again what slumber sounded like, time stretched thin and dissipated. Focused only on her breath, fear became a muted hum, mere background tune. The new shapes sharpened and then grew on me, all traced in such gentle light. I was alone, but not solitary. I stepped into the landscape of the hour. The world whittled down to me and the woolen dark of her room, her breathing, the tawny glow of the snowy night. I must have seemed a figment, hardly noise, hardly movement, slipping in between the dense folds of a dream.

HOW FAR ARE WE MEANT TO GO?

I.

The first time
I crossed a street
on my own was
to see my father
at a neighbor's
house. My parents
were furious.
I was still
so small— a delight
to dress in florals
and plaids,
fun colors
and stripes of all
variety.
What had I
been thinking?
Their reaction
upset me, who
had just wanted
to see Dad.
And besides,
I had done it
just as I'd been
taught. When
you're a child,
you believe this:
That the world
has been fixed,
or will be; that you
are good, or bad;
or, you want to.

II.

In June
we drive six
hours North,
passing the wheel
back and forth
until our eyes fatigue.

Our destination
a doorway
called forth
from fog.

Gravel gives way
to dirt. Dirt
gives way
to water.

We abandon car
for boat, and
then are left
with our feet.

A chill drifts up
from over the water.

Find where the fences
are crumbled with rot,
pressuring
the weak points
until they splinter.

At times, we bother
with the usual
pretending. Others,
we stagger
onto the asphalt,
unsuspecting, blinded.

III.

These lines
lose their meaning.

Before them,
on the downwind:
Something harsh
to the nose.

A carcass illuminated
ever so briefly.

I am the last
of the scavengers,
the one who arrives
after the birds
have finished
their feast & the people
their gawking.

I will crawl out
over the place
where nothing grows,
where rubber thins
what remains of flesh
into the blacktop.

I will look both ways.

3

CONVERGENCE

Wittgenstein was far

and our misunderstanding,
our logic

follows awkward

subtraction,

our lovers sprawling
pleasure,

our language
fallen,

desire only.

Summed up to the limit of flesh

we whistle close

meaning *truth*
meaning *sweet*

meaning *one*.

Our ribs afforded
each other's mouth

lips drawn

world indifferent.

If this kiss has a value it consists in two things:
a small vaulted room at the limit
of philosophy

and the definitive unrest
of tongues.

I am of the natural mouth;
am the *love*

the *eyes*
the *silent*.

If I am mistaken,
may others come
and do it better.

PHOBIAS

All summer long I'd fought off mold
in the kitchen, the bathroom, our food.
The faucet handles were unendingly covered
in soap scum. Thoughts ran tepid
until stuttering to a stop. Some days
regular conversation came as a slap
to the face. *How are you. How
have you been doing.* I couldn't just
drift through the world, observing.
And there was that smell again,
pooling beneath the drain. *What
do you like. Where do you want
to be touched.*

I tried. I asked a lot of questions.
The sink was full of food scraps
when I arrived. We were on our way home
and you were being really funny
and I didn't want to ruin the night.
My hands peeled. Wet carrot peels
and rice grains. Hunched over the trash can
while I filed away the dead skin. It was so humid
the glasses drying by the windowsill
would stick to the paint. If there's dampness,
there's potential for growth.

WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED

Lately, we have started referring to ourselves as though controlled by the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit has moved me;" "The Spirit is pleased;" "The Spirit needs to go take a shit." We have begun to seep ever-so-slightly from our bodies, cracked ceramic containers troubled with water. In the early morning I see you doubled by it, body magnified as though filtered through a prism.

While you sleep I
poke your outline, hovering above , your body
unawares. When you wake I ask what's for dinner.

"The Spirit is craving some tomato soup , " you reply
your nose an inch above your nose.

Yesterday's supper in the lower intestine.

In the distance
a tone plays
so high

pitched

that

neither

of

us

hear it.

THE OTHER'S BODY

Immediately, an island:
pieced into several bits:
red, warm, pink, the others
grey, drifting, away, away.
Chasing those furthest—
dreams? lovers? will?—

A mirror, then, and our ponderances;
SEARCH: There is a looking, here, gears,
metal, the *tck* of the clock, stick,
hands, arms, all continual continuous
moving, there is a large difference between
being alone and that other thing (you guess—
mirror? reflection? mystery?)
The bed just laid there while the droning
grew louder, we melt and harden
once cooled, the dream takes off in
a silk scarf, roll over and there it is
again, warm, red, pink.

It was very quiet: I was alone: the bones held
for eight hours of rest: blossom:
the face, turned, could be unawares—
it turns, still. Without it,
what is there to be seen?

The parts fly off again, the lungs
continued, hold, hold, hold, and rotate.

ON ELIMINATING OUR COMPETITION

Umm. Is it cheating if I'm like, one giant bug.
You know, because it's all perspective. Every minute

detail matters. You and your chicken aversion. Your
pan-sauce-loving self. Hole in the toe

sockless abandon. You rascal you. This isn't
some trick I'm playing where you are fooled into

the wrong answer. Come, let us point to our glasses.
And having shown love, the participants

begin to take interest in the contents of their drinks,
grateful for an object to wrap a hand around. No.

Not hand. Palp. If I really was that sizeable, I promise
I'd never trap you in my web. Never cocoon you

in slime. I would hold you in my six-to-eight arms,
each spine and tarsus one of love. I would never eat you.

Hypothetically speaking, of course. However big I would be,
you'd be bigger. Maybe a bird. That way there'd be no question.

Of you I'd expect the same. We'd skip the whole matter
of dimorphism, each our own case study in allurements

and virility. So prolific in the arena of affection,
they'd hang our portraits in all the halls.

The Most Symbiotic Relationship There Ever Was.
There we'd be, youth in amber, me with my shimmering

dogbane shell and you with your proud chest,
your two pennant feathers totally improbable, totally un-

aerodynamic, but so flashy any mate would be stupid
not to come running.

CONVERGENCE

At the library, someone answers their phone and speaks in the low tones of a mother. She wants to know if the person on the other end is feeling better, how their stomach is doing. Asks about what they've eaten recently; strawberries, cereal. Wonders where the sour came from.

—

The day before, I watch someone else receive a call and hear whoever is on the other end greet them from several feet away, a nearby room. The two of them speak as though they're unaware of this.

—

Months ago, three of us waited for a train only one of us would board.

—

When I come downstairs in the morning, my parents are still in their pajamas, hair bedraggled. A rare occurrence, to be ready before them.

—

My friend and I are in town at the same time twice—
maybe three times— a year. After breakfast,
there is a moment of silence in which
we think up excuses to continue talking to one another.

—

We are lead through larger swathes of people
than I've weathered in years and a sea of upside-down legs,
toes towards the sky, to ice cream and soup dumplings.

—

It has been four or five years
since we've last spoken. We will pretend the distance
is easily traversed, as though out in the garden,
gloves on, spade sinking into dirt with ease. As though
we are not still thumbing each other's new outlines,
wondering who we've each become.

—

I'm still half asleep when you walk in, alarm
having failed. The figure at the door, for a moment,
could be nothing more than dream shadow.

—

The last conversation I have with the man
who taught me how to swim is about my heartbeat.
I've just woken up after fainting. He is taking my pulse,
his face vacant, shuttered. He says the words
athlete's arrhythmia. I'm trying to focus on breathing
and counting to four. I don't know what he means.

—

She says they should stay home
from school tomorrow.

—

I knit you socks.
"You made me socks,"
you say. As if a miracle.

OUR RELATIONSHIP AS A BOWLING MATCH AT AN ARCADE, 6:00 PM

Sunday evening, gliding slowly down the not-quite-center
of the lane to account for an inevitable
curve. The floor here is stickier
than you'd expect in some places and slippery-er
in others. We both want to avoid the gutters
but can't agree on whether or not the bumpers
should stay. Is there any way
to decide this? Or it is just a matter
of how hard you can throw?
There are countless materials
we could be touching; plywood, urethane, skin...
I'm stalling. I want to say something funny
before my next turn. I can't guarantee
I'll touch any of the pins. I talk a bad game.
I have no special wind-up. Still,
we have come to play. We want
what any normal people armed with heavy,
spherical objects would want: A strike.
A steady hand. Yes. We want
one more go.

OUR RELATIONSHIP AS A GAME OF DARTS AT A TAVERN, 6:38 PM

To be truthful, I've never played it. But
I want you to be impressed when I throw.

LITTLE MYSTERIES

This give and take. This vehicle of love.
Inside, two drivers but one wheel. Bedcover
battles lost and Sunday lay-ins gone hard and
stale. Having run out of words, we tried deep breaths
and sustained eye contact but forgot what the point was.
The beginning of love. Or something. Said it over and over.
Something akin to the little mysteries when they were still little,
still mysteries, unthought of, unasked. Not puncture wounds
and moth eaten fabric. Having given you the characters of my life,
I let you stand amongst them. Time. The center console. A natatorium
lobby. Are you still coming over for dinner? I'll let you drive. We can run
out of options. Pluck every last petal. Rub our legs together until they chafe.

THE MEAL WE HAD TODAY

Woah... Okay. Right now. The hour is late
and our mosquito night has stuck. No, no, but it's also like,
a nice glaze. All those seeds preparing to onion up.
Today I had leftover love. No method of time. I believe
in the necessary nutrients; oats, violence, and whimsy.
Last month I took a vow to graze among the cactus.
I'd refused to tell the world how tough and chewy my being
had become, concerned only with the decadent. My advice
is to expect the weird shit. Hold the memory within you
before cooking it slow and tender. And remember
to have little birds circle around your head! Smell
in a cartoonish way, where you start floating afterwards!
Basically, I've been talking really good this week, having
grilled routine into the bread. They say the point is
to reduce it to a thin sauce, letting the nervousness
sit until it becomes the perfect answer. If anyone asks,
I'm just basketball. I'm just summer. It's all consuming.
I'm just kidding. That's also me.

I REMEMBER THE FORMS OF LOVE

So many years ago I looked almost like the fields
tough as the white grass

I remember we walked
we forgot our way together
no more

saw the invisible beetles beginning
to wonder

the sand
that ancient car
the grass

we walked our bare feet downhill
in the bright sun

the stars a ribbon
a lake

the first of August
all night

we took our heads
ringing

under the old jelly glasses
where June would have wet our feet

and leaving
you said *us*

AUBADE IN VARYING DEGREES OF COHERENCY

Today I awake before any of our alarms, dry mouthed and needing
to pee. Cemented into the bed and having slept so sparsely
I've dissolved the border between dawn and dream. Soon
the room will be sliced with sun. Soon I will step into the wind-bitten day

unwashed, face rubbed raw. Flaking sleep in the breeze
behind me. Donning nothing more than a thin film of yesterday's love.
We think it worth pretending the curtains are thicker than they are,
bed and light separated by more than polyester gauze.

Today I'll have only as much as two scrambled eggs worth of vigor. I'll clear
the old throats of phlegm. Till then, I'll slide through these next faint hours.
Till then we'll linger at the threshold before language, the world softer
and warmer than we know it to be.

—

Face in your armpit. Nose on the bumps of my spine. I wake
and I'm sweating. Lurch up into the still-dark. Put on a shirt and pants. Bid the dream
to stay out in the hallway, the sun below the horizon. Is that
where we are, now? Up twice to piss, once to shed more clothes.

—

Two truths. Two days we'll go alone. I'm mad and envious

of your mindless shiftings. Have been skirting the fringes of sleep
since four. More frayed than any of your worn hems. But you'll
join me soon. There are one or two more warm things to share.

—

I'll awake and the dawn the gauze the day of it today I'll wake
today I'll bed the border today I'll threshold pretending your needing I'll today
I'll don the language I'll soon your soft will separate your world
between I'll wind between I'll bed your throats I'll awake between worth

today I'll day today I'll thin I'll dry have dissolved so soon I'll mouth
the breeze will step the love will soon till then the old dream vigor clear till then
nothing till then the dreams our alarms our needing till then yesterday's face till raw
dawn our soon curtains soon the wind I'll clear I'll have till then I'll awake and mouth

—

Roll over. See your blurred face in the predawn gray. Let the fear
grow, unbidden, then close my eyes again. Something's beneath the covers.
I'm here. I list the colors of all the objects in the room, quietly, to myself.
Peach. Red. Navy. Cream. Look. Closer. There we are.

NOTES

“Centos of Questions” features lines from Arkaye Kierulf, Richard Siken, Sanna Wani, Jennifer S. Cheng, Warsan Shire, Dawn Lundy Martin, Donika Kelly, Margaret Atwood, Jack Gilbert, Derrick Austin, Chen Chen, Jericho Brown, Jane Wong, and Adam Zagajewski (trans. Clare Cavanagh)

“Objectivity” is after Canadian landscape artist Tom Thomson and his work.

The term “albedo” refers to the fraction of light reflected by a surface. In cities, the sky will sometimes look orange when it snows due to the reflection of light from street lamps, porch lights, or other forms of artificial light.

“The Other’s Body” is after Roland Barthes’ *A Lover’s Discourse*.

“Convergence” on page 27 includes language from Diane Ackerman’s poem “Kismet” and the introduction to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

“The Meal We Had Today” is inspired in part by Bhanu Kapil’s *The Vertical Interrogation of Strangers*, written using a word bank I generated after conducting a series of interviews with my friends. Our conversation was recorded with consent of the participants. My only rules were to ask the same three questions each time, and to only do it at a dinner party.

“I Remember the Forms of Love” includes language from Anne Sexton’s poem “I Remember” and George Oppen’s poem “The Forms of Love.”

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