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Draft 26: M-m-ry

Rachel Blau DuPlessis

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Rachel Blau DuPlessis

DRAFT 26: M-M-RY

That the airy opening hung somber,/ that the moon
trapezoid/ on the floor be thus, be/ here,
that musical/ logic in
the hypnogogic space/ come waves rush/
crosswise, athwart, they
suspend/ opaque particles,/ sand
versus translucence,/ and that this
filled/ void, this exfoliated down fold, volatile,/ asks for “rachel
back,”/ in subjunctive
sentences within/ the earth’s inward
narrow crooked lanes/ and startles who, or what, that
with me/ tripped the limen and was caught/ here,
maze of a maze, the/
she and I, the I/ of she “back from where”/ were
dazed amid the real/ world, the real real world/ inside which
this “guaranteed destruction/ of papers and files” exists
as such/ the service
advertised that this company provides./
*We have reviewed / the document—a one-Page Memor-/
andum—* Plastic ribbons blown/ blowing on
the twisted/ twigs
of 1995 be any
tree/ by any roadway, every day,/ the
wish will flood/ such shredded flags of loss/
with approaches/ *and have determined*
the variable/ space, feather, point, gleam, spume,/ midge
streaks readable or not.
More than that?/ *that it cannot be declassified/*
dim dawn-long day, twi-grey/ mostly
I just marvel/ at mild blue
watercolor/ light
a struggle/ between voices that compete/ to
identify what I want/ and other voices/ whose

high twists cannot be/ remembered
or released in segregable portions./ It must be withheld
that spoke/ of a hand erasing/ across the mind the collective/
memory of hope
our past/ in the photograph/
she did not look like herself/ she said/ tho she did
she'd half forgotten/ what we did we did
all that/ two decades whited out/ static
“that short/ of a time.” in its entirety /
on the basis of the (b) (1) and (b) (3) exemptions of the FOIA.

It's just time/ a soft unreadable light
sweet/ wax in wane./
Poetry the opposite/ so much, so many/ it's always/ said that
it remembers/ forever, it deigning
memorial design:/ this pile-up of letters/
don't do me/ any favors,
since, as the site/ of detritus and forgetting./
one could not want to see it bettered.

An explanation of these exemptions/ is enclosed.

Raise and lower the frames/ to lock
jacquard./ Aubergine robes, filmed
herself thus clad,/ ghosts of the homeless/ at the windshield.
Lives/ in furrows/ unspellable mnemosyne misty over
the field (misspelled/ as filed), its empty/ dashes
declare a signing gap singing/ gap of herself hello again
unpronounceable/ mnemosyne
blanking out in extreme/ sadness, bartering/ liquidity
to hyphenate the cracks/ because
they mark/ a bridge to
particulars one wants “forever”/ Marjoram
the tiny. Hyssop the twirly. Basil/ the tangy
in time stuttering
mn-mn-mn-/ cold morse/ dash dash
and sputtered out, the guttering flares/
gone ash.

This is a velocity of signs.

Small yards and all that infrastructure lying bare, beating still.

Train bridge, boulevard razor wire, resignation “wholesale.”

The many moons of Jupiter and other parts in a kit, the universe

soft in our hearts, who go the road of the unsayable

under phosphorescence, the stars and planets made little

enough for us. Here.

On her cake the “e” in “years” got smudged. Two full

dreams to catch the train

just left. Could barely decipher

the veering of the half-spoken, stubs

of the uncanny outcropped along the track,

dead and living yoked together that harrow

shattered shadows and dim light, their immeasurable

desires indignant for name.

Take it all as a loss.

Begin anywhere.

August—October 1995

The poet Rachel Tzvia Back was once a student of mine. “The earth’s inward, narrow, crooked lanes” is from Donne, “The Triple Foole.” “The real world . . .” is Carl Rakosi. “We have reviewed the document,” and so forth, in italics: a letter from that governmental body overseeing the administration of the Freedom of Information Act.