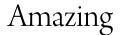
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Four Poems · Laura Jensen

Amazing

I was myself, the tattered who can. The sky autumn, the fog standing down in the pool of bay.

Far up, many stories, your desperate flag was waving, signalling for rescue. But only polishing the inside of the sliding door. You came outside in your white uniform. And all of us were watching from far below — a lady with a permanent, an older lady with a red umbrella against the sun, myself who just mailed two letters. You became

amazing, a gyration of the psyche. You were cleaning, so many stories above us, and it was not your house. It became like a circus, you were flying from the trapeze and it was not your house.

If it is your house and you wear the uniform only to clean then my poem is meaningless, then uniforms know no respect in this town, then your psyche performs something dangerous to us, to our country of women and poets, something aberrant and cruel.

No one could be so cruel to a poet. You were performing, walking a tightwire of the mind, raising cleaning to its rightful elevation, polishing the windows, so many stories above us, when it was not your house.

THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

The rajah, when he meant to honor (or ruin) his subject, presented him with a white elephant he could not sell nor give away nor kill, but must feed and shelter all its days in leisure for it must not labor under the lash nor perform in public for money.

In the beginning, there were the almond and poppyseed muffins

I bought for Thanksgiving, telling my mother she could pay me for them later.

Then I kept telling her no, it does not matter. And the day after, I went to my mother's to pick up vegetables and fruits from my sister, and a pale aqua scarf