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d w e l l i n g

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*“My body, still too heavy with sleep to move,  
would endeavour to construe from the pattern of its  
tiredness the position of its various limbs, in order  
to deduce therefrom the direction of the wall,  
the location of the furniture, to piece together and  
give a name to the house in which it lay.”*

Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*

**I.**

the thaw of

this

sound

might never

obscure

a word

heavies her lips

where

that  
of

pleasure

wonderment

of whispers

as dwelling place.

the appearance of a body approaching. curio cabinet: glass and reflection with an oak wood frame. a collector of sense data. edges suggest the forming shape. a living room. she walks across the floor naked. each shelf displays mementos and dust. when her mouth moves, she says something. now she could be anywhere. she was walking. say she is now standing in a private space beyond the home. warm stomach. lulling. some sort of hypnotic pleasure. a book, there in her hand. invisible displaced boat. reading: if I announce a subject, she, and then announce he, you form a bridge plank by plank. let me show you how: a plume of orange, the color just below skirt's hem. walks across the living room. hand touches belly, its own. the scent of an orange peel demonstrative of. has difficulty separating skin's texture from its taste. the weight of a body sinking into a couch sounds like.

reception involving memory – write the text with associations of home and recollections of its doorways. passing from one to the other. that she is recognizable though he barely glimpses. midday. transitional space as she crosses there. the glossy black mantle of a starling. something of her posture distinctly. reciprocal of which comes quickly like a birder notes field marks and nimbly classifies. this entanglement eternally present. movement from periphery to. backlit and aglow she is framed there. the experience of one minute might be more or languish. subordinate beyond the threshold she stands awaiting. he couldn't possibly. triggered by spatial relation a clock might be more than a means of keeping time. its claw so vibrant it could be likened to a crayon. discernable in her form. past pulled to the surface by another's selection. in glossing one filters the difference between reminded and remembered – its similarity to orange. knowing a reproduction lacks the same quality of age.

though its geometry makes it recognizable – most adhering to the program. goldfinch. appears steadfast as the subject of a photograph when. a moving picture. a living space. this likeness effected through lines. children often do. that on his birthday she finds herself returning to that home, that she can see herself there, that in each picture he is always the same: father. genetic imprint. the double-windows on either side of. its front. to the right her bedroom. baby-blue. altered perhaps by scale. resemblance assembled by matching features to memory through transient feeling in gut. by recounting forgotten stories. this being the thing never seen on her face. imperceptible. past as diaphanous scrim/private view.



inversion the prescribed action – the box either open or closed as the contents are not the same. so that some days he loves her and others she asks too much. desire. to be close. a forgotten corner of. this or that being her only choices which somehow seem to differ from his. a seduction: the gap between intrinsic. that time she said no more just before one last time. the superlative of what keeps hidden.

in spring they hatched quail – incubated and turned on time. stood back feigning indifference. her sister's fingers gentle against the shells bolstering father's pride. the coop with nests boxed from sight proved unsubstantial against

the fall. as when the first key turns up only rehearsed secrets to placate. second guessing. and her childhood bedroom floor. but this fate pivots in time with his whim. as she could just as easily give it up. always wanting a red front door she tells him many things but mostly about the grate as if a portal to a nether region from where creatures emerge and withdraw. like the stories we tell ourselves before dreamtime. and another inside deeper still.

as home is somehow everything familiar but nothing communicable. it only makes sense just then. a symbolic gesture. *la maison*. why thrush somehow makes robin more interesting though documented as bird. a fractalic map. mind. exists in relation to other stories on the shelf. perhaps something discernable in his face. the prince and his clothes or. she noticed it upon. to guess a history and inevitably err. subject as composite he thought her. legible text. some rhyme scheme to lend it recognition. could easily construct her past. guessing which memory came first. her, knee deep in snow, coming home from school, following her sister's footsteps. whose plumage of chestnut-red or pale blue eggs shall be labeled birdsong, a childhood metaphor for the reflection of light off bedspread and curtain softly through glass pane from. where can be seen the barren branches of winter grey.

nudity is more erotic if given in half-measures. blue-violet wisteria. from the lower edge of his ribcage to the middle of his thigh. she watches the hand its every tension & shift. or would you rather. she concentrates. or that's what he sees her silhouette. open wide & full of a certain , his. desirous with curiosity. radio static. it is important to let go first. decidedly the wrong question as red vegetables tend to be more purple. trailing motion between two. this mouth like a good memory tastes. there are limitations; distance being one. his hairs pattern a landscape — she will learn this. before wilting. referring to something he said. a graceful line merits circumspection.

the line of his frame traveled, mossy hillsides resounding with white – an oblique statement of morning. turtledove. slopes beneath cover might its transparency reveal too much or the leg disappears below. blueness of veins piercing through a cautionary tale. an injustice to prematurely assign sex with a pronoun. surely assumption taints your view. like a dollhouse features unimposing & small. pale shadows as this hour. reclining on his side hands tucked under pillow, forming the soft shape of a lowercase *m* – melting. a woman's hips. a home, a wooden frame. the body materializes at the point just past its unraveling. titanium white is selected referring to fresh snow or this morning's light. no matter if it faces east or the angle of his relation, the phenomena has a consistent occurrence. windowpane. it resembles a dandelion puffed, if glow has a texture. a dandelion expressing the fragility of. he lingers or is lazy. none too much different from the stories we tell ourselves. his countenance, a glass fixture for a light. gently now. the transferring of sensations. his skin does not declare one solid tone but like photo developing solution hints at transformations below its iridescent surface. that it is specific only to morning, that it is potent and miscible, that it expresses the difference between sleep and consciousness, is freely admitted. the rise of day. one looks in only to see oneself looking back. yes his. none have ever so.

tender has three motions. yesterday but that gracious is actually risky he will not change. some residue necessarily overlooked. so she different might actually be disguise. shipyard. where the light is falling around the room she knows though her eyes are shut. his face to hers delineates. or perhaps the obvious. today provided that no change of clothing would since last night. a limited trajectory. he knows she bites her tongue as they part company. the crowd incites hearsay. tentative taste. of or pertaining to the mouth will prefer. cargo bay. tomorrow if only cooking would couple mathematics. with intuition. weights and measures. her eyes nestle every bend, his face. devotional. a sensation not without merit. he reaches in. the loosing of skin. sleight of hand produces tears where words won't. dovetailing. here two. vital signs whirr. stimulation nonpareil.

to wit: penetration — unlike some public proclaim. chiseling stone. he certainly dissuades her from a steady hand. this bad faith noted in swollen or broken chirography. forefinger. it means nothing being “non” of what this would be normally. spoke and determined intermediary. scripted as a couch scene complete with street sounds and bric-a-brac. is he solely diverted. every edge of the ceramic unmissed by impatient fingers. battlements crumble. here witticisms voiced serve as supple guards to what is deposited. to thoroughly pass through she wants but fails. to recognize her success. an honest question foreshadows. shoulders turned in like a willow branch bending. quietly chirruping. perhaps private is better suited but with addition arises bafflement. the difference between town and country. he duly notes the complexity. cat’s cradle. the size of which does not determine its strength or crenellation. when two with novelty as disguise.

**II.**

unlike some

this

every edge

supple guards

shoulders turned in

perhaps

complexity

its

disguise.



beyond the mirror's reflection, that faithful counsel, desirability dares. she knows her lips sufficiently well; traces russet outline in gilded frame. one asks because one doubts. curtain call. their eyes meet a necessary pause reflected. her hand poised before her lips. holding. red. in the mirror reflected their eyes. silence proves dangerous where idleness takes possession. triangulated distance here reflected. let's say a pedestal table topped with a crisp doily and a decorative vase. chipped. imperfect but grasping tightly to necessity. a line of reason she has. some implied value. sentimental or indifference. her questioning glance. gleaming footlights. to which laid open to view though one stammers. the solubility of enticing charms. a plywood front, no matter of ornament, does not make a home, to hold things, to keep one near. this being a prerequisite for.

she shall paint her room claiming it through color. the selection follows an arc. is her choice blue. this affection spawns from sensation, propels, draws her after it. similitude. that history depends on who is telling and what story they choose, that hue is story – an inheritance, that the tone beckons an earlier one which recalls sprightly times, but now tenebrous from age.

exterior view: the house is shaped like others: front porch, a set of windows on either side of the door and the roof romantically keeps out the sky. each slat aged and shedding its paint. a corner lot. the color of my choice my room then. this too interfused – an attempt to collect me denied you. father, now that it gets confused.

she wants to leave behind but discovers forgiveness does not necessitate. forgetting. when she sleeps at night. erasure of representation – a new figure put in its place. some sort of searching in visual discourse to connect with. form, hers. perhaps all houses are drawn from nostalgia. to deny this established need. nudged awake, memory selected to replot.

each has their own causality – building something different using the same materials. alabaster or string. illuminated by knavish light, her mouth, cupped to his ear, whispers its inquiry, which solicits his tittering. being there a certain order to their relation. kneeling, on her knees, she rests her arms, bent, on his lap, formed by his knees, bent for sitting. touching for touching's sake. a sculptor's knowledge of plaster or expanse of body. sated skin felt enough. she would say touch me with the possibility. this is one way. in this a fingerprint's ridges only multiply. flush. the inside of which she has reached there too. inches separate worlds. the difference between shoulder joint and clavicle. bones for bodies and the elliptical space carrelled a moment. that they might be broken apart makes it all the more. to honor touches linger.

the idea of smoke replaced by smokiness. there being no other creation but to think. the end result: a query resolved: a collision of hand and wooden doorframe causing the remains to spill with remnants of the now-broken coffee cup. in this spectacle no one will take away the colors that make memory last. she lets go. when it becomes impossible to differentiate desire from habit. the table is set ahead of schedule. for which whiteness trades propriety for the bland. doorbell. possible to hold off the inevitable-predictable. she can hope as he advises against. once inside it becomes apparent outside only consists of the negative space left by inside's structure. there is the skin to consider not itself impenetrable though aiming for. that appearance. he is invited in. she takes his coat. this exchange: a model for all others: a matter of manners. out of the way there are secrets defying adjectives to be told offered as proof of. another inside always exists. the through-line of a spiral, the scent of amber resin, brief sexualized moments as when her hand, left hip, takes precedence over.

open but embracing, walls declare their corners. from what has been said it is evident that he is there but not in the same capacity, that she is afraid, that the blow of a distant train whistle instead of embellishing shatters the constructed silence of room & folds time, joining past here with. just as.

paper-airplane.

your hands sounded sand against paper. built-in drawers the lime of liquid in the tube of the spirit level used to determine the plane. building at the foundation. just as. father, I wanted you to know I too. the letters stopped arriving.

joining here – her desires impressed. hinge. they often used the conditional tense to define. the quality or essence of a thing. to get near, to see closely, to listen where nothing is, the touch comes first. texture: saw dust. what hangs here: pictures of family: works of art. she states her confusion when faced with departure. he is always already gone waiting to reveal the existent. shapes her regret. the nature of the action.

by rote: the image of something present. a row of flats – approximating one another. her surface quality the same as before while her content varies. these things change by. he tells her. in this room where they have sat before. emotional cacology. her possessive. framed – a portrait – like an innocent man caught by chance at a moment captured in a photo now curled at the edges and discovered in a wooden box among more of the forgotten and purchased for fifty-cents. as something quantifiable life collected and categorized. kept inside. the color of the carpet, quality of the light. going in. that there was carpet, that we had fish, the fabric of the chair synthetic against my skin, the weary milk box on the front steps, ominous and grey-green. to remember how it was. the door offers little but at front a small window to look out. montage of seasons' light held by memorypaste.

once now twice distilled, they. identical capacity misled by mass per unit. they are different which is just the same. revealed. her experience her topic. marred. politics his choice. which are the same though slightly removed. for each. certainty and the patience that follows.

preferring the prim path – an elusive position, theirs. while doors suggest some opening she cannot

look past. to rebuild what was once and now. which is this. motion in that space: between a sweet erasure and some contrary circumstance he questions. either presupposition or moved to nevermind she is. that outside does not equate to inside, that there might be more than the other choice, that stillness might arise out of something that once was temporary, a house where the walls waver with. spatial memory: the chosen shape generally just the same. one given that upon entrance a room has a certain duration. one prefers. an uninterrupted entering like those lips accepting a foreign color. his face in the warmth of some pinkness foretelling the difference between. what shall be is determined as such. tuning fork. she waits. the humiliation of love often its flush of urgency.

fear out of aberration: a common calling. off come the gloves. she speaks in order that whomever is qualified. but more what she avoids. a glass and a question of volume. frozen with waiting that a pitch might be reached to shatter. brittle breaks. they are in a room together or recalling the event separately. called by a name unfamiliar some curious version lacking accuracy. he whispers too much. white and oak wood floors supply a comfort associated with freedom from on-lookers. supple yields. perhaps she does not need to speak. or rather. sometimes that is not the answer says he. glossolalia is glossolalia is garrulous is purposeless. important to let go. walls define this space. the material is striking though soundproof. so he inasmuch as certain garments are restrictive. *en garde*. choking on a well-crafted *-ism* aged to perfect defense. she states an inventory of the room: a red velvet chair, a steel amorphous paper weight in the center of a glass coffee table, three windows, early evening light and her desires. a state of plunder, his. intersecting the floor's grain the windowpane stretches out shadowly. brown tones and play of light. he loosens his collar. hushed breath. she prepares to speak and does. braced for the quake imaginary she closes her eyes tight and grips her ears. in her mind a sonorous moment. music box. this room allows the sound to come out: her succumbing. the wake of this rapture disproves.



**III.**

out of

common

pitch

breaks

whispers

perhaps she

sometimes

striking

inasmuch as

a red  
early evening light

tones and

loosens

the sound

of

this

.

misunderstanding happens at close range, vision foreshortened. the kitchen table is round: as suits this vernacular: is where they sit. it seems one might move closer. the illusion of proximity. aiming toward purposefulness – a residential program. the window draws her eyes which have no comfortable place to. crestfall. a fissure runs the diameter of the table – a battle line. respectfully to topple the hierarchy of this dwelling. he is both where she comes from and where she is going. various strategies attempt to unsettle this history. something old/when it was new. might this desire realized only in hindsight. the journey and its traveler. yielding that the erratic flight pattern of a bumble. unraveling. only later to recall this moment as when displeasure curbed by reflex as smile. his or hers. once again. their lips. immediate. the way ripe means soft.

the shape, enduring simplicity, of the thing, a family, it, a house, is meant to hold. it is generally the shape of a thing. the program impresses domesticity – enshrined here. this room has a certain shape dissimilar from her body breathing just the same. life within abundantly clear.

each is unique not because of position or sex. that of superior structure being iron and labeled iron worker. father, I still dream about you. she encourages its dissolve or waking. or two years since. bristly voice & gravelly chin. that slamming of the screen door making it clear to be seen – everything through its hatch marks. I-beam resembles its name. being one with rigid edges and impervious in nature.

because she cannot see herself. nostalgia replaces blue moments of morning. she turns away from the bed. a window and a door imply the possibility of public exposure – the walls are decorated as such. familiarity of which necessitates that blind knowing as if each object connects to her with a fine silk filament. glistening. the vanishing point, she in this perspective.

upon entrance the difference is clear what one should see & what not, the space is often sectioned off, walls looming with intention while doors smirk. she has turned it over several times in her head. *stanza*. whose fever knows a necessary duration. or foyer. here: entering. the dissection is efficient – in smooth succession causing an uninterrupted flowing as a riverbank might its river. the parts one never sees. he determines to cross. precipice. she found him thus. to not only look but. with words infinite directions. he traces the title of a book, hers, on her desk. specific object: each in this room. before nervous fingers might check the passage, she. an odd position as one standing on the other side of the train platform the tracks rattling, as a famous portrait returning your stare, as subject.

object contains within it – the finding of some feeling of. identification of which relies solely on imagination. that some things will not be thrown out, that a phrase might make her soften, that there are some things of which she is sure: she is uncertain, the possibility in him, several categories of value. malcontent. dysarthric heart. and so she seeks. this her steadfast position.

more alike  
than. you would know this as the one time. otherwise the same, father. to you I keep running in.

to have feelings, not stupidity but poor judgment, for him. recognized as her weakness. she only wishes she could formulate some argument against her behaving. within the home each has purpose relating to history and function. as the privative element he. being of value and the object just out of reach.

and she is out here in the living room, where she is alone with nothing to hold only after she realizes. a loose weave. tripped. the explanation of usefulness corners don't allow. where she exhausted from crying only after realizes. intersections as wasted space. but only when two walls give up into functionality. upon close examination, the delicate absence of symmetry or any geometrical term. rough and ridges. that rug has been gathered up to be shook out. let's say she knew what was going to happen before. reasons that do not discount the impetus. so it is. and always is avoided where this point is achieved by the meeting of. and sorry is her tired face and long eyes from a lack that disproves optimism. therefore he is not hopeful and she hopes for that to change. exactly which is. a look met by no smile. for entertainment make it something. a mouth missing is really where disappointment arises. if sex is something definitely avoid it. to deter complications. because he will never hear the sweet center of what she is saying, because she wishes he would, because he knows the results: the unattainable sublime: delicious absence of what almost.

which was a dream that followed her into waking. the stairs inclined to a trapdoor which opened to more stairs which were a wall that she was at the top of. the angles were wrong and painted pink and mustard like a painted lady. she lost her footing and scrambled only saved by a specter's grip around a wrist hers around his as she spread arm and legs to pressure a hold like a spring clamp as he told her to he told her to hold on.

traversing a space between two points, if he only resemble his face.

these things cannot be made easy. father, the way child-weight on your back solid beneath my small feet walking the path of your spine. the hand you're dealt which you might be surprised at my remembering.

waking she lay open as an autopsy susceptible and angry that the light has already come into the room. a specter's hand poured into hers. first of few but greatest in impression. he cited fate for how well they fit. eyes pale and blue by design. definitude creates definitude. house now distorted as. the memories it holds.



may well rise upward as is its inclination. contained in the alveoli of. now tends to consolidate in a manner of honeycomb that denotes both its ambulatory arcade and its clerestory. a mnemonic cathedral. her verticality is one thing to be sure. she is standing when it comes which is of no consequence to. a memory. wherein cedar shaped with dust and sharp incline this scent of found only on the stairs leading to the attic of her. diaphanous. a body of articles: crayons, dictionary, sewing tin. fear of the dark. smaller hands. purpose no more than the curve of that ear. hushed-tones drift to where she around the corner and determined. dim light from the window at top. mingled for a moment with this season. this instinct to inhabit fed equally by that to construct. housed. not because living is the same or remembering. which may have identical rates of evaporation.

**IV.**

cathedral  
a memory

its inclination  
denotes

shaped

a body

from

this

instinct

remembering.

this scent of

mnemonic

drift

belief as blinker – her bridles compliance. family photos forgetting most happenings. when she returns home he is already waiting for her. place as both internal and external cue. each string of sound, of smell, of weather creates fabric of. woven into landscape. tree swallow's nest. whose familiarity distinct as a steel chair's cold against your back like a stranger. if they would venture this far together. she lay in the grass. each blade meticulously plucked by his fingers and placed to cover her. it takes hours. he is silent. she is still. until this green cradle materializes molded by her shape. forever the building sequence guided by the memory of the state of completion of this artifact. weighs heavy. a structure considerably larger than its extrinsic influences. *locus classicus* of love – as this that she holds.

anxiously above the skyline whose lights mimic those seen from the window of the living room where the season expresses the basis for her returning for which she feels her mood colored by the ceiling at which she is staring while considering the possibility that home by definition is haunted. she knows memory has to live somewhere. hummingbird. somewhere is the same location. this varies accordingly though it seems unmoving the objects might be rearranged. cartography of this is the place that she calls home. simply. points plotted: one three inches directly above her navel, one 45° to its left. the fluttering of wings quicker than. here there. no outside: an anti-nest. at this point she is always outside while always already being inside this. somehow is more than the objects of which it consists: black leather-covered ashtray on tabletop, the double-beat of the side-door swooshing shut, the crankiness in the creak of the second step. these too or evolution decides the suitable shape and fate the finding.

identity manifest through choices. pink porcelain poodle. precisely because of its specificity. imagination is more than. she is there because she lives there. another body. meaning there is a skeleton with skin. that its every inch contains story, like her first baby tooth left in a glass of water for the tooth fairy who paid her in change which felt like a fortune, that it shelters but is more than a place to hide, that though it seems consistent it feels different every day. whooping crane. its silhouette the fascination of many artists – the curves and patches of red. a transliteration of its animating force. something obeisant in each shift perhaps due to its backdrop being the sky.

what categorizes space being prescribed action – allows digression. which each unit joins to form. wall. giving nothing more than its function. space implying perimeters – begins with a corner. might something be inscribed there with some feeling attached. she feels. and he. learned language of the senses: the trouble with describing things that are not said. contradiction in experience between first brush of fir tree and push of breath when one finds the word. always falling short of. whippoorwill. meaning the word or its song. its prescribed action. departing from convention suggests some tradition. as shelter has a history she thinks. built line by line or some minimum complete utterance. negating proclamation as his desire. that poetic function comes first, that mind ascribes memory to each, that desire weakens, why she plans to place all photos of him in a box prescribed for.

there is comfort in distraction. meadowlark. she stands at the window which is a wall. the terrain where no other view is offered captivates with familiarity, hers. if there is water close by it makes itself known by song. the buff light through the trees refracted through glass blankets her face. rustling. not something one would choose to share. this skin neither partitive nor crystalline here further. whether outside pervades in or whether a deaf ear is turned; no use for padlocks where the senses solicit no hold. it is obviously raining or has. given any beginning she can hypothesize. a looking forward and away. rain imbues the soil, couples with streams, makes its way to the sea. an empty house has the possibility of guests. the most exterior of senses causing.



dematerialization of wall – when a wall is not a wall but. the bright of four p.m. into the cold she emerges. it's best when it comes without thought. that upon meeting she would kiss his cheek, that it will leave its imprint, that he will be left with no way to respond, their discourse. a circuitous route. inside adopting the vastness of outside as another's eyes. the point of entrance. walking the labyrinth interchangeable with a euphemism for intimacy. his greatest fear. maintaining inwardness. moonflower. a statement of the night before retracted. the other side of compulsory action. sensate information allowing a bodily understanding of. a varied song that of the indigo bunting indirectly accomplishes this same task. when traces on her lips: something left behind: of him.

in the anteroom waking-dreams wait to enter. the future a day later changes. here there are no doors but ventilation. it could be that in passing from here one does not move but is only suddenly elsewhere meaning not here, that the word *pass* should not be used because it implies movement which is misleading, that perhaps the anteroom with its permeable structure does the moving while maintaining a hold on this winged reverie. has never seen for herself but has heard it described as such: cupped between two hands: a tsunami. the origins of which can be traced to the whisper in ear at the moment of conception. only need grab her chest.

combating an ideal – going against convention. that she would do the cooking, that he would take out the trash, that they might settle down, is one way. mutual desire rips open each and they stand revealed. so they believe. being there only a moment that forces are in balance. dangerous to feel desire as dangerous to be desired. the affirmation felt. when desire takes away with it the gifts that it seemed to coffer.

Heather C. Akerberg loves making things, be it with glue or words. At Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, where she received her B.A. in Writing and Literature, she made book covers using a letterpress printer. In Providence, where she received her M.F.A in Creative Writing from Brown University, she made mistakes but eventually found her way. Her work has appeared in *Bombay Gin*, *untitled: a magazine of prose poetry*, and *Aufgabe*. Expected out soon: four poems to appear in *Conundrum* and a chapbook, *if so . . .*, from king of mice press in PA. (Guilty pleasures: HGTV and *Martha Stewart Living*)