



(em)bodied bliss

Marthe Reed

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For Jerome Rothenberg

We tell ourselves whatever we have to
In order not to stop.

– *Laura Mullen*

This doesn't exist

somewhere, water. or otherwise discreetly, voice enters as a refusal of night. the exact proportion of finger to forearm escapes me. if I were drawing the dark, in which of its permutations would I appear

no mistake was possible

like the rats, hunger. a constant companion. the stuttering of locks and doors. there is no one else. stink of urine

this is an illusion

the shape memory takes in the absence of volition. pushed aside. I inhabit its corrugations as an exercise in clarity. nothing intercedes between me and the stars

the right point of attack

the weight of them, so like water. or vermin. a voice in extremis echoing against steel. shuffling of boots as in a well

forget the transcendent certainty

inertia of belief in which I do not fail to doubt. it is time for drinks, a cocktail. manhattan by way of preference. different meanings. a convenient guise

this doesn't exist

A dream is a desire

dream is a desire, is a story

A dream is a desire, an authority against which we rebuke ourselves. A passage against night. When we woke a gecko threaded itself across the woven ceiling: fresh eggs and papaya for breakfast.

The ceiling is not blue but an elaboration of yellows cascading toward blue heat. Feathered toes of the gecko where it hangs from the rafters. Hunting. Cotton, resist stamped in blue. A pressure against which we weave, or are woven: lion god dancing toward the temple.

Dream of monkeys, smoke rising above canopied green. A dream, or desire. Water ache poured from a long-handled cup. Another rebuke. Cold. When we woke, elaboration of desires or sweetening heat of banana jaffle, stories.

Rough chatter of hens and kitchen fires. Bull-form sarcophagi entomb the dead. A passage or dream of night, which is. Another blue. Feather cascade of stars. Yellow defines an idea of the light, or traces its circumference.

Rebuke, or resist, an idea which is itself blue. This is not (is) a story, I am telling. A dream of breakfast and the dead. Dream tracing the circumference of desire. We drowse on the veranda, air ripe with heat and the broad smooth leaves of bananas.

A pressure of blue and yellow. When we. Counterpressure to the elaboration of another authority, wake. Blue (feather

cascade). Or collapse. Resistance amid the rough chatter of definition.

A statement of policy regarding the high value target

we heard a lot of screaming

– Walter Diaz, military police officer at Abu Gharib at the time of Manadel al-Jamadi’s CIA interrogation.

obligatory the syntax of control, inexorably coding a space of

shame’s confusion obsolete

as a matter of policy, alter the perceived time of death. a permanent corpus of knowledge accessed via the interior surface of his eyelids

narrating infamy

it is not our policy. that is, we–

“the president enjoys complete discretion”

there was no impartiality. abstracting the order of bruises and postures, of blunt blows to the torso

the fine bones of the cranium

described in detail, the rigor of the disciplinary regime.
betrayal

wrists bound in cloth diminish the trace of a mark

against the contagion of terror a window onto night,
binding us also

the gloves are off gentlemen

punishment, the most hidden part, cataloging deprivation

suspended by his arms from the bars of a window, five of
seven exceptional techniques

ritual of blandishments, ritual of conceit. ritual of violation,
language's complicity. a crucifixion

it is not our policy— the required level of pain, a matter of
intention

with respect to force, beyond our borders, we

death by asphyxiation, confusion rampant again

lowered to the floor, *blood gushed out of his nose and
mouth as if from a faucet*

our tongues are tied

Kishuf

If you see a generation over whom the heavens are rust-colored like copper so that neither rain nor dew falls, it is because that generation is wanting in whisperers. What is the remedy? Let them go to someone who knows how to whisper.

–Talmud: Ta’anit 8a

1

kishuf water lily
yellow

water iris

hyacinth
flutters

splashes

into itself
mutterings of
heaven

cypress (*kishuf*)
coding form as
formlessness

mirror of heaven
lily leaves
drift over its surface

blue

iris score its mirror
brilliant orange || hyacinth beside lily

2

hyacinth, hyaline, sweet
taste of

burnt orange and yellow
mirror a question splashes

into itself
form and formlessness

heaven matters of
definition

or imagination
a drifting of leaves over a surface

a cat
hunting in a mirror

3

leaf mirror
(voicing a score of others

memory flutters over its surface
matterless

whispering under a rust-colored sky
mutters like a good

jew
a god, this majik

language translates itself into silence
babel (gate of god)

enters by means of
a language of flowers

question issuing into the air
tumult || delight

water forgives the mirror
an irrelevant question

reflection's collaboration
blue and yellow form (forms)

yellow scores the heavens
makes a muttering of its own

4
hyaline || hyades
light refracted through
a confluence of mirrors

a lens or remedy
pointillist
v of light

scattering these
daughters of darkness
a glass through which

intention moves
refracting
heaven's noise

5

water mutters
even in darkness

rust-colored sky obliterated
kishuf

calling to the air
(her) daughters

arrow shaped
 blue—

violet scores the air || chanting
language of mirrors

of fish or flowers, green
swords knifing the air

Re-doubt

a mechanism of grievance
convivial

anguish, a
closed and congenital ethics

such reinforcements necessary
do you doubt me?

implements that make
you / mine

memory abandons us and we
cannot keep up

or usefully insert the required
definitions

desire body hope
coming to wrest

wreckage assails me
compelled or obliged

will you favor me
text of anxiety

the taste of your sweat
procurable and

measured threat
questionable certainly

the nature of innocence
fearing

up
such motives obscure

the temper of longing
you give yourself, I—

a natural
adherence or obligation sequestered

in the dark
usefully

I have—
in the room

the body twists
listening in on itself

there is so little
left, we

a rupture
in desire

dwells indesire
lost

angle of observation
(a caesura

destabilizing itself
like doubt

what goes
missing

Three: auto(auto)biography

after *Sight*

for Lyn Hejinian and Leslie Scalapino

memory 1

It is not possible to order memory, or recall: flowers on black. A woman gathers loose folds of her skirt in her arms, slides her bare feet into the water. "I will not." A theory of precedence (what I do and what I intend) gives way. The thickness of air before the wind rises, carrying off the day's heat. Wading in brilliant emotion, describe a precise chronology of events leading up to this. An order of memory. Flowers on black. Luminous evening where black cockatoos gather on pine boughs next to the garden. In her arms, the thickness of memory. Birds on black. Luminous. Flowers wither before the dusk.

memory 2

An object recalled, flowers on a dark field: dialectical suspension. Dogs bark under cover of night, the random correspondences of sound and movement. (Desire). The exact pattern of light and dark described in its weaving, an article of apparel, *garment*: a means of clothing and revealing a woman's lower limbs. Under cover of flowers. Yellow wattles and banksias, dialogue in neglect. Her flowers a temporary dissonance. A dress. Field of light. Gift to which she could not reply, the precise shape of silence. I will not argue over permission. An article of memory suspended. None of this has occurred. Will.

memory 3

In the advent of an unrecorded past, musical notation suffices. I am unaware of any other. (Hers). Article of emotion “where there are birds,” where the tracery of garden vines clings to garden walls. Neither denial nor recollection. (She). The flowers once gathered suffice. Unaware of words spoken, diminished, luminous. Musical notion. In the advent of memory, the thickness of memory, the movement of water as bared feet push their way into it. Taut skin over warm flesh, in way of inventing a past, absent of any other: an article of luminous emotion. Sufficient. Bared feet form a tracery of ripples over the water.

Lilith (1)

*Of which I understand nothing
Sleepily*

– Mina Loy, “Three Moments in Paris”

understand sleepily
nothing

(carved in
relief)

vertical channel
a necessity of which

I
nothing vertical

stands
a sign or surface

sleeping
a glyph

a preference for names
understanding necessity

collapses
relief (sleepily)

she understands
such glyphs of god

a channel worn by

his desire

but she has
put away such things for now

consorting with
necessity

Lilith (2)

The book is as old as water and fire.

– Edmond Jabès

*Telling of tales without words / And lies of no
consequence*

– Mina Loy, “Three Moments in Paris”

consorting with necessity
in relief

layering there
lies, surface

of water and fire
surety, book

or sign
without words

sleep transforms necessity
taletail of desire

collapses in an
“halfhour of being a woman”

consorting
with demons

glyphs of longing
a mere

groove or

channel, necessarily sleeping

lies form
surface of relief

a beautiful halfhour
demons

also beautiful
architecture of fire and water

Lilith (3)

Having surprised a gesture that is ultimately intimate
– Mina Loy, “Three Moments in Paris”

a preference for necessity
for fire and water, heat of her lovers beneath her

a preference for tales
mirrors and infant abductions

a preference for surprise
for a gestural vocabulary

a preference for deception
for the illusion of a green earth spreading before her
hennaed feet

a preference for empathy
for eyes spilling thorns and petals, fragrance of suffering

a preference for angels as well as demons
sharp angled ache of a scimitar

a preference for laughter
for obscene gestures and filed teeth

a preference for phantasms
for her daughters’ 1000 shimmering skirts lifted over their
lovers

a preference for mourners heedlessly keening their grief
Samarkand’s gold and green mosaic walls

a preference for ambiguity
for the mystery of the hermaphrodite and the bloodied earth

a preference for exuberance
for brilliant crimson and curcumin embroideries,
damasked cloth

a preference for secrecy and texts
the halfhour gesturing toward itself

a preference for doubt and honor
for hot sugared tea burning her mouth

a preference for defiance
a woman clothed in a 1000 shimmering skirts

Lost things

maybe / nothing / will come to mind
– Keith Waldrop

dispensing
with words

I balance
holding my breath

*

such “enigmatic treasures”
betray me

falling into
submission

*

a whole legislative
history

keeping
it quiet

*

obscene politesse
a seductive and—

a ragged breath
pleasures

*

language recurs
coiling out of memory

litany of
exceptional circumstances

*

invoking theology
a border with death

appears beside me
among lost things

*

wandering talk
any one of the

predicate acts
absents them from me

*

elaborate
codicil to proscription

threat, a
blank and indifferent space

*

schizophrenic elimination

of reasons

liability, comforts augured by
a lover's embrace

*

the barest scent
a tissue

of petals
famishes me

Text(ure) of compulsion

1

everything had to be told. the exact measure of the gap
severing knowledge and expression. a gasp of pleasure or
pain

the interrogative impulse

no one doubts the sincerity of affliction or such incitement to
hunger. filled to bursting. breathless

fluidity, a compulsion or pressure playing against breath

can you feel me? in the dark he reaches for what has already
vanished. the compassion of touch. whether knife or a
finger's caress. such gentleness knows no bounds

confession's disordered bliss

2

a shadow in a daydream, such solicitude. in the amputation
of regret, will you kiss the cross? or the president's ass

a rosary of forgetfulness

thou shalt not cry out. no longer spectacle, the procedures of
grief skeleton silence. the body's complicity. beads of
absolution scatter to the corners of a room in which dream
recurs

or nightmare

certainly, more subdued the suffering of others. a profusion
of cries stops our ears. though never imprudently, grief wells
from the site of erasure

steel pincers tearing at flesh

3

pursued down to their slenderest ramifications, a closed door
assures consummation. will you attend these?

a thin rod and a collapsed form

a thin rod against which there is no recourse. or doubt.
copper's green: in the dark I can no longer find my body. its
dissolution defying convulsion, furor

grace

methodical prosecution of bodies and language: what was
said and what was meant. sodomy's baton, phosphoric acid.
an image too slowly dispelled

judah's cradle murmurs at our ears

Which is

a pause which is
which waiting || a breath

roses dampen the earth
petals sweetening the air

sun petals
a perfume or

rhythm pauses
falls

petals beading
a texture established by opposition

(he) falls || an opening
a line a crushed flower

petals dampen
her skin

sweetening (she
falls and does not

pause (petals crushed
memory scores a line

in opposition petaled
memory opening or establishing

the play of a scent
under her

tongue a fine beading
a pause or || breath

which is not
waiting over her skin

petals, he (a
scored breath

there is no opposition in this
waiting defers an established rhythm

he inhales
a scent of flesh

which || memory
(his tongue cannot

alliterate these pleasures)
a pause or flower which

opens memory
which is

hers a taste for
heat the sun beading her skin

a pause (petaled
which is which

falls
is a petaled rhythm

alliterates desire

Lago Maggiore

white boat
white wake

*

green hills
or breasts

*

sparrows amid green
persimmons

*

a sparrow
table

*

a gull
or tern

*

turning
air

*

water over
rock

*

conversations in french
italian, english

*

“we”
are expected

Three Veiled Women Holding Flowers

after Gulinar Ablat

three
women in red
veiled gaze

amber into flowers
women three women
in white

silk in yellow
veiled in red
silk

insinuates itself
between breath and air
between mouth and

a red flower on yellow silk
red ruff of
silk red

against white skin
three women
draw

do not draw their veils
three women inhale
the scent of flowers

three pairs of kohl-lined
eyes

a gaze

refuses to meet mine
looking away
at flowers

at red silk
at anything a smile
and a gaze

a suggestion of
doubt
three women glance

into the sex of a red
flower and smile
gravely red lips black

kohl lashes
black hair held in
suspense

a veil and brocade
cap
yellow silk insists

itself black hair
red mouths no
doubt you are hungry

a flower tastes of honey
a mouth
biting into honeyed

bread warm
pastry laden in honey

bees

are like that
mouths also
tasting

three women three
red flowers
a white veil

a single yellow veil
a red veil swirled in red
taste this

KUBARK Manual

::Sensory deprivation

The dark persistent and intense. He cannot hear.

The early effect is anxiety.

Do you recall the texture of your daughter's hair? The play of light on water? What is beauty, or desire? Can you recall?

Beneath the hood, the order of days collapses.

::Threats and fear

Cut off from the known and reassuring, the tension of fear.
[10 lines deleted]

The dog's violence and ferocity are nothing personal. The marks of his teeth, your nearest companions.

Balanced on a knife's edge.

Afford him an acceptable escape.

::Debility

Next, the induction of physical weakness. He stands for hours chained to the bars of his cell.

Pain and pleasure indistinguishable, an “acoustic bombardment.”

Grant his meals and sleep irregularly.

Can you feel your hands now, where you lean at their furthest extension? The pricks and needles of blood’s deprivation give way to blankness. –Wake up. You are ready for fire.

:: Pain

Let him stand at attention for hours. Days.

His resistance is likelier to be sapped by pain he seems to inflict upon himself.

After the heat of the desert, the cold so refreshing. Your shivering the mark and trace of its effectiveness. Perhaps I shall arrange a blanket?

Electrical burns on the soles of his feet and on his genitals.

:: Narcosis

Your regression is inevitable. The threat of the drug most powerful.

A neat excuse, one without blame.

The usual effect: the interrogated's defenses crumble and he becomes like a child.

Answer me.

:: Addendum

Treat the prisoners like dogs.

Shorn and godless. *Beg for your supper.*

Extraordinary rendition.

A whip is a form of justice. Did you not kill some of my own? The marks on your flesh, evidence of my grief.

Temple market

My soft mouth of honey is suddenly confused.

– Enheduanna, Persia, ca. 2300 BCE

honey mouth and
honey air

Tashkurgan tower of stone
Tashkent figs

pillars of hot
tandoor nan (buried

stone oven
stone tower open air

pillars of warm
market figs

black skinned figs
flat bread

carried in honey air
market pomegranates crimson-

skinned
peaches coriander and yellow

fleshed melons
persian melons

saffron sunflowers on black
garnet

head scarves
women weigh

fruit in their palms drink
rose petal tea

tasting green figs, honey
mint

like Enheduanna
her soft mouth

honey mouth, sweet
confusion black grapes and green

figs, yellow
melon

honey mint onions, half-
moon sanbosag and nan

mouth filled with restlessness

Of the Shulamite

black milk of morning we drink you at dusktime
– Paul Celan

*The way the sky turns deep honey at noon. The way my
sensations seem to belong to a me that has already
sided with the world.*
– Rosmarie Waldrop

with the world what
alternative to that honey
already

 woman
dusk skinned
fragrant as olives

green rue
fastened in yr hair
Celan's black

milk yr flesh
saffron & pomegranate Sulam
garden you've already

sided with honey
with green figs & flagons of black
wine saffron scented robes

sided with myrrh &
aloes, damask
rose

garden & gardener
our bed is green
yr jeweled cheeks

yr black
hair sided with Gilead's black
goats

sided with Israel
like pillars of
smoke black & tasting of cinnamon

sided with milk
sided with honey honeyed morning
cedar house & fir

sided with wilderness
forest of grape green vine
so pleurably flesh

yr hands a henna tracery
vines green shoots green
rue in yr hair

dusk woman
yr body a skein
black silk

sided with fire
sided with
red lilies, vernal

anemones & lilies
Genessaret
anemones already green

morning yr hair rue
yr fingers smelling of myrrh
yr jeweled cheeks

olive skin yr
flowers & black milk
you wash

yr feet
in the sky honeyed
woman Sulam

black as Celan's black
milk, black attar morning
we drink you

kiss yr
hennaed wrists *so pleasurably*
a bed, or gesture

tangled garden
damask rose among black
pillars

cedar house yr jeweled
hands & hair
black as goats, as black attar

yr jeweled cheeks
a drink at dusktime
a damask sky

Shulamite the sky
a tracery of vines on yr wrists
hennaed tokens

letters, calligraphic gestures
already siding with
sensation

yr rue yr black goats & wine
Celan's morning
our green bed

garden
henna trceries like pillars
of rue & vine

or rafters of fir
Sulam & Israel
Solomon's sustenance

black milk of morning
damask & black skinned
apple Sulam ::

Shulamite
wild garden

Lectures from the Marquisate

Suspended between faith and license, in the wrong place at the wrong time. *Yet it is always by pain that one arrives at pleasure.* “we adhere to the law”. A certain knowledge exalting necessity, its compensations.

The way to your heart lies along the path of torment.

Intensity measured in the movements of the heart, a sanctioned exercise of authority. *In order to know virtue, we must first acquaint ourselves with vice.* Your fault without doubt, confession its only recourse.

The ritual purifications of the flesh, a process in which reserve is no longer required. *There is no livelier sensation than that of pain, its sensations certain and dependable.* SERE protocol, a secret inquisition.

Only when laws are silent do the greatest actions occur.

An illicit discourse, ours, though your silence heightens my necessity: “correcting our own mistakes and weaknesses”. *sensual excess drives out pity in men.* Listen: rats and cockroaches of your cell.

We move with perfect conviction *destruction one of Nature’s mandates.* “Our reservations, understanding, declarations” performing the necessary work of permission. “Take comfort in our adherence to the law”.

But in privacy and silence, let us compensate ourselves.

“Those were the instructions”, *the means by which the nation is nourished, strengthened, buttressed*. You cannot evade the peccavi: *never so dangerous as when one has no shame*. A determined subversion

Taking on speech

A means of composing a moment (compass). As if it were possible, articulating what suffices. Blue silk washes over her hips, water, or what alludes to water. The faint grace of silk where she lifts her face to the light. Compass. The sky given over to blue, an ordering of fine, blue threads, or particles of frozen water. Blue. A thin line of cloud moves away from her, where she opens her mouth as if to speak

Vanishing point: intersection of two lines (lives), a compass notating their retreat. Lines on paper. The exact point where she arrives on paper (entering a discourse). What she will or will not say, she gathers the crinkled folds of silk into her palms and presses the blue into her skin. Discursive transgression. The second time she appears to speak, blue silk spills from her mouth. What suffices

Water. There is no precision in this. What was said, or ought to have been (the compression of molecules of air, beating in her throat). Air moving at a higher velocity, well above the layer of cloud. What seemed to be silk or the motion of water heard (a palimpsest), embrasure of a word playing itself into existence. Fine threads of cloud or breath

Palimpsest? The movement of air, discrete particles over her skin: the discreet movement of air over her tongue. Discursive acts, a digression. Do not be misled, the two lives (spoken and unspoken) move in parallel. A curtain of silk faille points at the misdirection. What is said, or was itself. Itself is a digression. A faint motion or current of blue

Neither cloud nor breath. Beating into existence, the
fragility of air at high altitudes. Is sufficient. She peels
away the light armor of silk (blue silk) embracing the cold
air. (*Embrace.*) Lifts her face into the light (a discourse), a
compass of shaped air. The way these (the precise point)
letting go into the light, weave sound

The daughters entreat the Shulamite

scent of black skinned olives shining with oil with lilies
Genessaret lilies in yr hair red (honey) in yr hair black &
already fragrant damask-skinned woman yr hair yr fragrant
hair & skin yr hennaed hands green rue & leaves these
adornments yr grape vines & wine

tracery of vines yr hands or veins a jeweled tracery lapis
formed language of desire in yr hands green figs green &
saffron colored roses at dawn yr roses turning or you
turning yr hair glistens with fragrant oil with Genessaret
jewels vines argot of flowers cast at yr honeyed feet

honey woman black skinned Sulam woman olive woman
lilies form a jeweled script henna adorns you we adorn yr
wrists & ankles with lilies we adorn you green rue in yr
hair garden redolent with saffron with fragrant olive
flowers these already belong to you yr hands petals & green
figs

roses their red petals their green & russet canes a tracery
milk & honey fragrant ointment dark wine saffron adorns
you yr saffron robes green rue in yr hair black hair black as
Gilead's goats yr petaled hair belong to noon as to morning
where you turn against the sky you drink damask rose & he
sighs

jeweled woman lapis petaled woman woman of Sulam
deserts & wilderness jeweled language woman yr saffron
mouth & myrrh scented handscrocus stamened hands green
robes yr green bed in yr hair black & winding swath
Genessaret lilies & roses he sends you green figs & roses
eat them yr teeth white as washed sheep

you stretch out yr ankles dusktime myrrh & the savor of
roses jeweled yr robe dusk a sky fastened in yr hair lapis
petalled sky already honey already olives glisten on yr
mouth flower language gestures from yr wrists & ankles
you stretch out etched wrists garden's voice yr black hair &
wild pomegranates his ardor a veneration:: yrs

Her reply (the Shulamite)

(damask sky	rose black & lapis petalled
blind to itself	language glistens or bound dusk fastened with brooches
jeweled opening & erasure	henna dipped brushes adorn my wrists with signs gestures
a language of	
Genessaret anemones	Genessaret lilies
green rue figs & vines another language	a green bed a fastening of vines at my waist another
hunger bound beckons grassy palimpsest green roof or sky	(or unbound glistens like dew green bed
black &	longing lapis formed desire
mine	

Complicity

immured in a predicament of virtue

sighting grief

the way light opens day

is it possible to both effect and

feel

a pressure of heated sand

horror

appropriate and consistent with military necessity

or breath

a naked defiance

leading us about on a leash

waking in cold sweat

under no obligation

necessity of polite euphemism

I pursue the narrowest touch

inflicted in defense of

covering his tracks

a caress

though the bleeding will not stop

a memo or authority, a legal

recalling the cold intensity of ice on my tongue

predicament, “harsh

treatment” preferable to

dissolving

virtue

individuals outside

the pleasure or relief night rouses

citing decorum, decency, *niceness*

U.S. territory

if I close my eyes

redefine the measure of reason, its limit

enforced

I see you lit against an autumn sky

nudity

a subjugation

its color an affirmation, bliss

a legal regime

hooding, drowning

the scent of jasmine

the postures assumed

meticulous

I had forgotten

preparation of scalpels

expurgation of the body

your eyes

a manner of polite

discourse

warm and dark, like wine's lament

*a badly exorcised complicity between the body's
mechanics and*

a breath

the mind's complacency

it was only a small cut

or caress

enumerating our obligations

there was blood all over

where memory presses me

conceiving

death would be

there, here, lodged in time

inconceivable

we must be prepared

night's dissonant multiplicities

organ failure, honor

an untenable disturbance to equanimity

relinquish dawn

Honey song (shekinah)

*like a tent / stretched tight / around the ones who
live / above*

– Meshullam the Great ben Kalonymos

who is daughter of light

– “The Maiden”, Syriac/Greek ca. 200 AD

daughter of light
her earrings make
a tent of the sun

whisper against her skin
 rubied
dwelling place

light's
amber reflection
leopard eating sapphires

she bards her table with wine
with bread and sweet
myrtle lemons

preserved in honey
(hers)
a garment

worn, a garment
or
garden

pitchers of sweet wine
and honey
garden's table

earthy
mouth of sapphires
kindling

between her thighs
wisdom
's daughter

tent hung with golden crowns
with sapphires
an earth

or leopard where she walks
letters tremble
like webs

daughter of wisdom
her
bangles light and

honeyed flowers
 forms a garment
she welcomes him

the face of god
sweet
table, a garden

or garland
on whose back
he rides

mouth of sweet myrtle
her eyes
form among leaves

dwelling place
silvered letters
fish swimming into light

a woman
her body
crown inscribed with glyphs

face of
god
garlanded with myrtle

tasting bread
tasting
sweet wine

she welcomes him
sweet
fish like

lanterns, a light that whispers
in the air of the tent
or her earrings

silver and
red, rubied
whispers at her shoulder

from her mouth
(garden)
he takes

daughter of light
gold spheres
myrtle

flowers
bangles lit by the sun
bronze

moons and drapes these
over her breasts
dwelling

place, text of
light
or silvered air

she bends her
hips against his mouth
letters falling like honey rain

whispers
silver light
over her skin

in the air of the tent (she)
where she couples
words

in samarkand the face of god
is the sun, it
rides upon the leopard's back

Current of geography

1

moving across a frame in space-time
place moment
spatiality pushes aside temporality & I drift
current of geography:

insect hum bird call water spill
 leaf rattle
oak pollen & oak catkins drift in the air
collect
on every surface sexual
snow of oaks south
Louisiana douses itself in male gametes
turns
chartreuse azaleas beckon white
and blushed
wanton seed making
generation

2

time reasserts itself generationally
if I stop
moving do I occupy the same
place or has
history left me behind

larks still call from lemon trees dart
in low trajectory
lemon to oak
shallow goblets of rose scent wave
on pressure of wind
breeze traversing another

space

3

walking or not walking I rest
here now there
gather in laundry before rain
or washes
her hair
or reads voraciously
outdoors
ignoring summons to
day and duty:

fish carve at algae with orange mouths
green giving way to black water
spills into itself
a long trough introduces sound &
oxygen lemon
blossom brushes its scent over my skin
& spring stays
here where I stop

A kind in coercion

Ontology of contempt. *If I place a hood over your eyes, forgive me. I thought the sight of your own blood would unnerve you.*

Our talents are innumerable:

The use of the hood

The use of restraint

Ratcheting intensity

Alternations of despair and reprieve

A question of right use. *If you gasp, you inhale your own death.*

Will you need your left hand? Ours, a clandestine ecstasy, pathology of excess.

A kind in coercion

Naked

Smeared with shit

Smeared with blood

A crucifixion

(Don't look away we have only begun

Rogue Interrogators

at the farthest end of impermissible actions
– John Yoo

transitioning the HVD

the precise gradations of coercion:
diapered, blindfolded, transported

laid out like corpses

*The cell and room were air-conditioned
and very cold. Very loud, shouting
music–*

“it is ‘for real’ and more poignant and
convincing”, the videotapes blank

*every fifteen minutes twenty-four hours a
day*

“best future medical judgments”
necessitate full documentation

a team of physicians, psychologists,
lawyers

Sometimes the music stopped

“Accordingly, ‘prolong’ adds a temporal
dimension to the harm to the individual”

waiting it out

a loud hissing or crackling noise

“persons will have to sacrifice some
measure of privacy and liberty”

*A thick flexible plastic collar...placed
around my neck so that it could then be
held at the two ends by a guard who
would use it to*

shaved, stripped, photographed, sleep-
deprived, starved – the exact minimum
of calories required to maintain life

slam me repeatedly against the wall

it was a matter of national–

*The box...totally black on the inside as
well as the outside*

the “sovereign” cannot be deprived of “a
recognized prerogative”

It was difficult to breathe.

“The intent to torture appears to be the
most relevant.”

*When I was let out of the box I saw that
one of the walls of the room had been
covered with plywood sheeting. From
now on it was against this wall that I
was...*

the “hard takedown”

*...smashed with the towel around my
neck.*

“we were focused on trying to establish
a link between Al Queda and Iraq—”

*I struggled against the straps, trying to
breathe, but it was hopeless.*

Mr. Zubaydah seemed to turn blue

“We knew that Zubaydah had more
information that could save innocent
lives, but he stopped talking.”

I thought I was going to die.

two sessions per day, up to two hours, 6
times per session.

I lost control of my urine.

The precise grad—

security forces us to make certain
compromises.

*A tube was inserted into my anus and
water poured inside.*

“—and we were not being successful”

John Yoo’s certainties

Providing the necessary palliative

I shouted for help—

care, anti-depressants

“it is difficult to take a specific act out of context and conclude that the act in isolation would constitute torture”

nobody came.

“I don't think we want to be promoting a view of zero tolerance on this”

Isola Pescatori (I)

Motion refuses capture, a periodic disturbance. Hull length presupposes crest speed where granite waits water, another pressure. Sussuration at the edge of consciousness boundaries its own fluidity. She sits encapsulated by sound. A boat cuts through the lago, its blue and brown body writing green into white. Mountains insist horizon. She retreats outside, leaving behind an undefined stillness above water. Like air, body which has fullness and not a line. A description in prose. Such fluidity disguises the situation. Sound glittering and bluegreen.

Isola Pescatori (II)

Hydrology asserts a vessel contour of sound, black crowned tern knifing sun-warmed air. 10 a.m. A wave performs a wake. We are not without questions. Green persimmons nestle in leafy shade. Wren and sparrow chorus. No matter, a body which is bodiless, architects the moment. Shapes a space into which “we” appear. Terracotta roofs, pink and red geraniums, jasmine. A single bell tolls the half-hour. San Vittore. A space which is sound. Another boat recedes away, clamor falling into water. To construe pink from gray granite requires a ritual gravity, the precise placement of chairs before water and light. Bodiless also. We accept shade, light and shadow performing their own wake upon the air and the hard convex surfaces of persimmons.

Ghosts

Any convenient opening, means of describing a path. I need to explain. Inertia, disbelief. It was a matter of— Sovereignty. Composited. A matrix of procedures, slicing it open. *It*. A series of covert transpositions: released in remote Albania. Like a figment, myself, representing what? Drownings, a consensus on forcing the point. What we will or won't. Go there. I need— A body reduced to its own likeness. We would like to believe— To be mutually aware. Conscience. Tracings. Counting the disappeared. There were precise records kept. The calculus of disintegration, bodies in black sites. To smite. If we decouple representation from performance (who was holding the rod when he died?), is meaning lost? Meaning what? Tracings, figments. Apparitions. “about a hundred” detained. This will only take a moment. Eroding the outlines, wretched appendage. Blanked videos. Cutting us free— Extraordinarily rendered: to explain. Traces, composite images, ghosts. Khalid El-Masri, the extent to which we— Loose meaning. Likening it. We were — mistaken identity, mobile sites, “prudent and responsible planning” — getting there all along.

Isola Pescatori (III)

Architecture asserts a window defined by the presence of camellias and a grey and orange cat. Sparrow hunting is a dicey business. What vanishes at the edge of sight, sites this. A distant palazzo, a crumbling church, a forest of larch. Butter dissolves on the tongue, abandoning bread. Uno cioccolato, per favori. Artemis acknowledges the light as her own, without comment, as mist slips silently into the water, masking both distance and sound. Only a red kayak. A red kayak heads to the smallest of the islands. A noise of hens or swans, cygnets obedient to the frame posed by jasmine and camellia. The lago invites me. "I" would like to swim. She takes ham from my fingers, delicately licking them. No one is awake.

Winter Canon: South Louisiana

Bare branches draw a pale refusal, irritable beneath an absent sun: charter of stillness, an opening overhead in the dissolution of leaves. In the absent canopy, black and white warblers, flashing brilliance of, prints like small hands (augere, to increase: litany of imprecision.) A negotiation with place

Language rustles, dry in the wind where cold etches yellowed grass. Empties the air. Composition of wet clay and oak. Roots assume a quiet determination. A space shaped by the persistence of rain, or raccoons. Small hands worked into the earth, their tracery a sentence forming at the edge of memory.

Leaves and their absence, recollection a process of accretion or sedimentation. Bare trees efface the distinction between sky and horizon. In their refusal to abide by the darkness of winter, vines cling, asserting a motion forward as well as back. Twining. Light-washed trunks of water oaks and ashes. Motion

Forward: augment, a vowel or a lengthening of the vowel. Winter refuses to participate. Canon piecing together stillness and motion, cold and the directed movement of low pressures along a gradient. Warblers and the flashing brilliance of. Language pushed along a current of memory.

In the absence of memory, language insinuates itself. Introduces another pressure. Permission, augere. Moving tangentially to the source, water erodes its passage. Creek bed washing away earth, revealing the twisting architecture

of oak roots. Bayou a crosshatched flightway, language and memory.

(em)bodied bliss

Pain / we have always / to count on.
– Keith Waldrop

The words themselves, guises. Predilections. “coercive methods” and “principles”. For example. A dance language performs in our absence. (Em)bodied bliss. The art of getting there.

A mental disturbance

A membrane or network of sensation, punishment’s lexicon. Scattered like marbles. What the bed hides. Or a closed mind. Wishing it weren’t so, playing at blindman’s bluff. That and the oppressive nature of night.

A kind of employment

Meaning. No longer predilection, or desire. The necessity of entry. Press your tongue against mine and whisper, love. Reduced to animal level concerns. Any hand in the dark will do. Will you write this down?

The certainty of memory

A statement I can neither confirm or deny. The equivocal space a body takes up. An absolute against which everything must be measured. We no longer approve its uses. Hands, tongues. Mouths. I have lost all faith.

If we imagine the facts

A clock, a winding of time. Or lock of hair about a finger.
Would you abandon such touch? Or memory. Fastidiously
secure. The past is no longer available though it is possible
to compose a memo after the fact.

A mistake has a ground

The necessary gap words leave behind. Undressing the
page. Your apology is accepted. Though the kiss and the
cut are now inextricable. Nodding heads in agreement. Will
you require a receipt?

I make certain false statements

Choosing a word at random. None of it verifiable,
subterfuges in a game. Are you reading this? Deprivation.
To deny, to rob. Yes. Doubling the ante. He failed to
continue breathing.

More or less arbitrary

On that point, what I want and what I know. Yet to map the
correspondences remains beyond the scope of the current
inquiry. Driven by urgency. The quick heat of a body. The
witnesses are unreliable.

Perhaps not even formulated

Signaling from the gap, words fail me. Will you drive? I
would prefer a reply though the letters have vanished.
Certain deletions from the record unavoidable. Exploiting
the wound. The rules of engagement have changed.

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POETRY

Marthe Reed's *(em)bodied bliss* is full of beauty concerted alongside the space of the body, the territory of the poemscape and the space of the "I". Reed does not leave her poems to stand alone, she weaves them together like a tapestry or testament of skin in reworking color, breath, shafts of light, motion. Abject as it is blissful, this naked missive serves as witness, and remembrance--in veritable lyric waves, recounting.

–Susana Gardner

In Marthe Reed's *(em)bodied bliss* "motion refuses capture." Here we are moving bodies configuring ourselves around (em)bodied (motile) text and as we do so we too become more embodied. In this profound document we are provided the opportunity to deepen into "confession's disordered bliss." The content and the form of this book are ductilities directing us "into the sex of a red." Into body source and body sorcery. This book is sensuous record of suffering and of pleasures—both as elementals within the movements of (em) bodied. This book itself--a convivial Lilith "letting go into the light [to] weave sound."

-j/j hastain

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