

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL POWER

Asked if they favor more taxes for the rich, most will say yes.

The question remains: what do we mean by “more”? What do we mean by “rich?”

If a woman earns 399,000 she owes 117,000 to the government.

If she earns 400,000 she owes 140,000.

Most will say that’s not fair.

The question remains: what do we mean by “that”? What do we mean by “fair”?

%

This work is missed.

This work is scum.

This work is bias.

My baby drinks tea.

My baby is a notorious gate.

A little sad.

A salty rod.

INTO IT 2

And now, I said to no one, I'll write a fourteen-line poem that includes one dream, one piece of news, one mention of the economy, one stolen line, and one imagined art installation.

Like this:

1. A dark corner lit
2. The copies of trees
3. Not mine but a made place
4. The real renews itself each year
5. I'll do whatever the radios suggest
6. There lies the body; there lies the marvel
7. Faced with the extravagance of fruits
8. These woods are all woods
9. I am scuffed awake
10. How could I possibly join such urgency to such a quiet frame of mind?
11. The body announces nothing; it is itself the annunciation
12. Illustriously useless poetics
13. Then there is the hidden quality of genitals
14. Hurling us even farther from the sun

A SHORT PROSE PIECE ON ONE OF THIS BOOK'S CENTRAL THEMES

We are raking leaves. Or I am raking leaves and she is wandering around picking up leaves, and a man shows up. He looks hot, I mean he looks overheated and sunburned or, the red face of an alcoholic, and I know when he calls me “ma’am” that he wants something. The usual “your neighbor told me to ask you,” then shows his hand, the infected gash. I remember this from subways, the men with amputations exposed or diseased faces or wounded legs—he shows his hand and begins to speak. I’m standing still, not saying no not saying yes, I’m listening, and she walks toward him and holds out a leaf, which he takes, then she takes it back. He laughs a bit uncomfortably, and continues: the wife who left him, the kid at home, and how he had a Band-aide but sweated it off, how he used to bring in two thousand a week, but now zero, and he lifts his hat to show the other wound, not so bad as the one on his hand, more a scrape or a bruise on the forehead, and then, almost in slow motion, still standing before him, she opens her arms and wraps them around his legs, her face too close to his crotch. I, also slow, say Lucy, come here, and he pats her on the back and says, aren’t

you affectionate. I take her hand and we go inside to find money, a ten is what I have, and I return and give it to him. Then he leaves, not without first offering to bring her his son's toys, since his wife left with his son. I say no, thank you, you don't know, he says, how awful this is to have to ask for work this way, and I say I'm sorry, and have a good day, which feels stupid. We are raking, there is silence, and I say, why did you hug him? I don't know, she says. I say, if Mommy and Daddy are not there, then don't hug a stranger, ok? but if we are and we say it's ok, it's ok. There is another silence. Then she says, don't ever say that again.

LATE NIGHT BUS RIDE

Farmer says his daughter in Afghanistan learned how to massage a heart to keep it pumping, to send a needle full of blood right into a collarbone to replace the blood pouring out of a wound. Double, triple amputees every day. What I wonder, he says, is who she will be when she comes

back home.

Corn in Iowa sold mostly overseas to feed cows in China, cows in Mexico. Very slowly we slide into the cloudy Denver dark.

For the dreamer slumped against the glass there is nothing to do about the runoff from synthetic fertilizer. Dear regulators,

please come back.

%

Was hoping to escape the bare language of fact.
But is it too late for complexities and games?

The yard holds its whiteness, witness.

The phrase: *fallow-pleasures*

BECAUSE I

saw the moon and then the moon she gone,
half moon sliding under protective oh—

and if *The New York Times* was the only news I ever saw I might feel
hopeful about protest movements and movies and underwear and prosthetics.

%

Some evangelicals believe in witches, demons, and “defensive shields.” *That they also believe in man-gods who return to earth has long been accepted.* Dear self, dear almost finished life, to think with my jaw is not to think well.

DYNAMIC INSTABILITY

Strikers in Oakland snow day my love a pillow floats into view give it up
The candidate accused of sexual harassment is the victim of a “witch hunt”
Coach can’t afford the big house so we fuck a bit from behind
Lucy is proud super proud to do the twisty thing a celebration is in order, ice-cream!
A bit of blood on the pj’s I made the lunches
Greece no confidence and possible severance from the zone French say
people before finance said let’s go to dinner let’s discuss our future but I bet you don’t know a lot of interesting facts
about the bush
baby. Remember when I was so depressed and now I am happy! And not “distant”
but on top?

%

But I cannot remember what instigated this process—was it statistics, whether bad or good, or was it the longing for
spiritual knowledge to emerge from inside the machine?

I am forbidden to understand. I speak into an empty space, no, into a “forest.”

“Are there real forests in this life?”

“Yes, Lucy, there are real forests in this life.”

“Real ones? With bears and witches?”

“Bears, yes, maybe not witches.”

“Bears!?”

INTO IT 4

In 2013, 1 out of every 30 children in America is without a home

Statistics increasing in 31 states in the nation

2,483,539: an historic

high. Recall if you can—before the 1980s children were very rarely homeless

2010: 1.6 million.

2013: 2.5

2017:

Colorado ranks 37th (50th being the worst) state in the nation for child homelessness

%

Ian says he's closing the soup kitchen. Can't afford anymore the security guard.

Addicts and moms and veterans and teens chatting or with heads in arms.

The phrase:

master bedroom

FOUR ARGUMENTS ABOUT THINGS

1. I sleep in the basement under more than one quilt; note the pens in their white cup and the beautiful speech of Hélène Cixous.
2. Dream a little boy walking toward me across a field.
3. Then off to the airport into deeper more northern parts and I don't like things I like words.
4. To think with the stomach is to not think well—my almost finished life is how I think of it—fingers on keys and the tired curves of my spine, wearing an ass.

A FOURTEEN-LINE POEM ON INDEPENDENT STUDY

1. one burning lyric
2. stayed sayless
3. our technique's so feline
4. it takes its time
5. like a trail of ants
6. across a hall
7. nothing's not
8. born
9. a primate a psyche
10. an umbrage a rag
11. say God in the
12. beaten air's
13. birds we'll eventually
14. be

My desires, as a person perhaps beyond the “middle of my life,” are to remember to feel the lived-in body and to allow my children to leave me (primary).

To contribute to a revision of fairness, to be blunt, to speak. Further, to allow my parents to leave me (secondary).