



julia a.k.

+big hugs usps

to think I have taken
this walk before
home to post office
post office to home
and have not fallen once
while walking as I read

in this parcel,
this waltz of limbs working,
I imagine carrying myself
on for eternity
as I open each envelope
and read the content of my life
as I am simultaneously living it,
and reliving it

+this here delicate man

his method of planting
a handful of seeds
is to launch by fist
full into
mostly compacted soil
individual
threads of life
he steps on top of them
to secure their stay
steel toed boots
with untied laces

the lawn grows
despite rugged invitation
his green sea of success
a reflective surface
to gaze upon
his own
brilliance
staring right
back at him
just outside
his window

if each seed had been kissed
before individual
pinched placement,
a soft pressing
into loose ground
blessed in place
by gentle touch
with barefoot
well intention
No one could say
for sure
that the grass
would be greener

germination is not personal
emotionally it is unbranded
their seed bodies
unaware of anything
beyond how
they are placed
that one time

they sit
without forecast
or expectation
of how their life should be
and what the world
will offer
them

+I leave you

a bowl of water
in the event you come home thirsty
when the moon is high
and outside there is someone
that needs it more
than you do
and is also more likely to stop by

I sit at the window,
fogged and smudged
it is difficult
to reach every corner of a home
that is in a constant state of molting.

Chicago is very dusty.
she observes the accumulation of particles
to be greater here than where she lived before
I can't comprehend how it is measured
and so I say nothing in return

the moon wanes and waxes
I keep the bowl out
a stagnant fountain
to observe
no current
waves
or ripples
the 1/4-inch layer of soot
tide unpredicted

the surface of the water
tells me **a lot** about time
and the quality of the air
the dust still
composed of pieces of you
even after
you have left.

+bait;

like my breast floating
in a bath
wish it hung so
light
like an ocean buoy
guarding a lobster body
an underground trap
sealed shut
a small opening
feeding anyone
but the lobster

+conference calls in the lecture room

the individuals in the room are discussing
the complexity of the human hand
and the brain's ability to make sense
of low resolution video
the goal is to train
a computer like a dog
to recognize a hand

the discussant is considering
the complexity of the task of recognition;
the ability to perceive an object
with accuracy
despite its orientation, size
luminance
we are good at it.

he argues
in the defense of computers
that hands are more sophisticated
than the human face—
less homogenous
“they are without consistency”
and he doesn't say much more
but we absorb
his sureness

a sign language interpreter,
sits stage right
weaving a narrative blanket
through three-
dimensional space
I scan her hands
and then my own
and then his.
it is then that I notice
he is missing the middle finger
on his right hand.
it is then that I realize
that the audience relies on her
to have ten fingers.

our attention is certainly on hands,
that much I understand
but if not on the hands in the room,
then whose?
we talk about them
as if they are separate organisms,
accoutrement, a gun,
something attached and also separate;

something we borrow and wear
at the same time.

the audience relies on her to have ten fingers,
and we rely on him for
?

+the chute of life is good

I don't feel jealousy often
but when I see construction
happening on the 8th floor of a building,
the large yellow slide
connecting the window to the sidewalk
way down below,
I do experience something similar to jealousy.
someone without any connection
to the items that they are hurling down a chute
into a receptacle another man,
without connection,
will drag away
somewhere unrelated and far away,
I do feel jealousy.
for the fall those items feel,
for the joy of the push,
and for the man
who gets to drive off
without a care

+two backs, two back bones

my sister has had a birthmark
for as long as I can remember.
south of her spine
the shape of a light leak,
indented
like the braille on the elevator button
that you touch
as you travel to the upper floor
of your apartment building.

I was born with a birthmark as well
a shade of pink
flesh with my skin
visual by sight only
a kiss the size of my adult lips

in my mind,
and I say that because I've never discussed this
out loud with my sister,
we were stamped with the same ink
when I locked eyes with the home
her birthmark made on her back,
less pink each year,
I felt a warmth,
similar to looking in a mirror after a fresh haircut,
experiencing
for your own physical form

it wasn't until I moved
into a 100-year-old apartment in Chicago
that I noticed the shape
was printed in my mind like a watermark.
standing in the shower,
in the textured glass that protected
my naked body
from the gaze of those walking on the street.
a repeating pattern, an abstract shape
coin-sized, also indented
three dimensional, hand-made,
I raised my palm
to touch the glass
already sure of the texture
before I made contact.

in the sand feet in front of me,
burned due to negligence,
she gazed upon the shore,
i hoped that she would live forever
and that as we aged,

we would know exactly where on each other's flesh
once lived a shape we both shared,
before they were absorbed by our bodies
and became a shared secret that lived
underneath our skin.

+well rounded diet

vitamins &
herbal
remedies;
I don't believe
they work.
but on a shit day
I take
a handful
I call
on the
expired
audience
of supplements
that sit in the stadium
living behind
my bathroom mirror
their diverse bodies
coated
capsules
men's multi
poor man's T <<consider opening with this
liquid kelp
a trip to the sea

I close my eyes
and try to believe
in their ability
to work
if taken
consistently
which I'll hold
up for a month
maybe two
before ultimately
I remember
it's not worth
my time or
money

+man talking

I.

the man repeats,
“girl, stay”
at least two dozen times,
as he attempts to command his dog
who is leashed

to my ears out of context
his words echo and transform into a mantra,
slow and rhythmic,
as the portal to his world opens for me
much larger than the section of grass in which he sits,
allowing me to imagine the many girls—
the ones he has asked to leave
and the many girls he has begged to stay

II.

waiting on the corner of 7th ave and 32nd street,
I hear a man standing alone,
about ten feet away from me,
project his voice
like a cannon
“I have no idea what I’m doing in New York City.”
and I feel comfort in my bones
for the first time in a while.

the cicadas
sing their summer
screams
they compete
in the art of speaking
over one another
as I try
and fail
to remember
In what direction the sun rises
or sets for that matter
making it hard to
indicate where the fuck I am
but only remembering how little I know
when asked

+fruit stripe

his diet
consisting of sugar-free gum
and sugar-free energy drinks
that he buys while the car
he's left
unattended
sucks up
the \$4.67
a gallon
after gallon

back in the car
he unwraps
and uncaps
makes his way home
to the static of AM radio
fluctuating voltages
of taurine and spearmint

watching baseball
third inning
he slaps
his chew
underneath the coffee table
his woolgathering
uninterrupted by
the fine motor skills
required in
this thoughtless moment

the gum joins the conglomerate,
underneath
the putrid hall of spit
delicately outlined
multicolored
hedge stones
marked by his
disinterest
his carelessness

the older pieces
give the new member
an acknowledging look
and they feel seen
in their depleted
tasteless body
for the first time

in a while

all stashed
under the communal table
collecting the sounds of the
communal space
the earth's crust
or whatever layer exists underneath it
(in this instance
the underside of the pressure-
treated wood)
just above the sweat-filled carpet
he never cared
to move the table
when vacuuming

their contorted
shapes
their edges altered
left hanging
resigned from former
positions of importance
a crowd of near misses
empty words
emptied mouth

the inning is over
Ah....
the refreshing taste of a
new stick of gum

+airfare cinema

I don't turn off the music
entering both of my ears via headphones
as the flight attendants stand in the aisle
telling us what to do if we lose oxygen
or if we were to crash into a body of water.
I look up
but only to watch the choreography they do.
You know, that dance,
the synchronized points and waves
the pulling of strings
the buckling of a disembodied seatbelt.
they are the airline's marionettes
angels that do not work for the sky
they just know how it works
and what to do when it doesn't.
their performance comes to an end.

I know at one point they will remind us
to help ourselves before helping others
I have to wonder what memory enters each of their minds
when they repeat this advice day in and day out.
who in their life simply takes too much
who takes and takes from the women
ripping the wings off their backs
while the women imagine that one day
when they will get all they have given, handed back to them
as they recline in a teal plastic lawn chair,
holding a lemonade with a pink umbrella and two ice cubes,
as men fan them with large palm tree fronds.
that is, if they don't go down in a plane
before that big day of reimbursement comes
if the sky works until then

Amy Winehouse sings
as I drift off into a sky of my own
where I take a seat and stare
into a mirror that rests at the bottom
of a shallow pond
and she stares back at me
and mouths,
"so tired,
I'm so damn tired"

+botulinum

she was not a doctor
but she had absorbed a lot of information
both in passing and in seminars.
she knew it well.
she could regurgitate the ingredients and subtleties of each medication;
chemically and functionally
I am confident that if this was not her access to income,
her access to a state of mind that during a good quarter,
allowed her to buy her kids
that one special thing,
she would not have chosen to fill her finite brain with such content.

being her child,
I grew up with a heightened awareness of my skin;
its immortality, its senescence, its beauty.
I learned in great detail
how my youthful face would age
and sag
and how each feature
could be a future investment
if I so desired a cosmetic route,
if I should choose to not let my skin fold
and melt at its own pace,
I could purchase my older face injections
I could see a surgeon
and they would tell me
they loved my mother dearly
as they touched the skin on my face.

+I

I am passing myself around like a football
across a turf field of casualness,
as In I don't believe that we fall in love
for any other reason
than comfort and convenience
and to be caught.
and when I look around
I realize the crowd is made up
of all these connections
that have happened accidentally-
sometimes I place peppermint oil
next to a puddle of ants
just to see how they
rush around—
their pheromone trail
disturbed, dispersed
the red checkered background
they've never actually seen
but daydream about
no fate in the end zone
we are all suspended in air
making incidental connections
and nothing more complex
than that.

+flow agent

the purchase of a bird
perpetually positioned
within bars
without warning
clipped wings
to suit her
incongruous crypt
in which she is perched

withering
within
her own mind
she will sing
but only when
she knows
she won't be heard

her hereditary heath
imagined within the nape
of her bird neck
she waits
endlessly

+30-year-old man elects to have a flip phone and is part of a cool Chicago noise band!

what makes writing about you difficult
is that you do not stand out
what I know
is that you are human.
you are made of shapes,
an oval for a head
a triangular torso
rectangle legs.
you wear red
you do not say much
you hold two drum sticks
your boyish figure
passively upright
it is obvious
you do not know
how to be tall

I know little beyond
the impression that he is man
speaks softly to manipulate others
calls you by your name
during each interaction
and with such minimal effort
you become unconsciously convinced
that you're special to him

he's all gongs
and snares
and stares
lanky
Yamaha ass
bitch

+flat

my car
now one thousand dollars more of a car
than it was before I paid someone to fix it

my bike
one dollar more of a bike than
before we filled up my bike tires today
and you paid for it
so I could ride out
on what more closely resembles
bricks

after a long day
when neither air is free
but the ride gets smoother
thanks to that seasonal leak

Every so often I hear someone say something and it causes me to think;
That's a poem. That's what love is. Someone writing a poem about their own life, without even realizing it.

This collection of poetry is a showcase of the people whose voices have made their way inside-out of mine. Entangled in their own complexities, for better and for worse, they have come through me here in this format. Taking up bandwidth, planting their seeds, frozen in time; I imagine each poem as a hedgestone of thought. To the cast and crew, this one's for you.

cover includes images from
signwriting; signpuddle; — a system of writing american sign language

julia a.k. - chicago resident, new york born, queer, 5'1", loose cannon

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