

DISTANCE AS VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL

The grass on my screen—yours actually; grass twice removed, from me. Grass I've never seen or heard before. If I could step on it, I could step under a jacarandá, the one with the accent mark on the last syllable, the one whose identity a children's song misconstrues and gives light blue flowers. Violet above my head in a mane, violet all over September as the start of spring. Winds and time will bring the focus to the ground and the word *scattered*. The focus on a hemisphere away. Carried by birds that tell us a story about migration: leaving and coming back to *away*.

A REPERTOIRE

I remember people's hands. Details. Gestures. Textures. I don't make a point of it; more of a comma, separate but connected. My grandfather's hands rested on his knees, as if holding the world steady. Just like the picture of his own father in the only photo we had of him. My grandmother's hands were the softest. Spotted, bony, and raised veins telling a story I'm still trying to piece together. She believed in a direct connection between her hands and her heart. I took this into account when what was left of communication was caressing. That professor in grad school whose hands were always in the air, speaking with him. The way the thumb curved so rectilinear. A wonder. The psoriasis on some fingers, sometimes, indicating a flare. Yes, all these hands come in bursts. Like my sister's small hands in gloves catching a falling star. Or my own, born without nails. In their place a raw red. Vulnerability.

THE NECESSARY GRAVITY

Ice is slippery and gravity
takes us from vertical and moving
to falling, horizontal, and still.
When back up, I remember to breathe
my way back home, carrying
bones and muscles that ask for
attention. My pace is slower but still going
until hours later I know
there's something
I forgot. Cry to mark an ending.

OPERATIONS WITH LIGHT

To delight as in bringing pleasure to or enjoying pleasure. But isn't *de* a prefix that takes away? You get rid of something to call it back into presence in its absence. Now I get it better, so much light can't really bring pleasure without some darkness. The way the sun is too much without the generosity of a tree and its shade. Things are complicated: Is it the tree that delights? Is it the sun? Is it how they create a possibility together? When I delight, am I bringing the edge to joy or am I destroying the endeavor? Impossible to tell. Like how a verb in English refuses to say if the action is done to oneself or to others. It's a major difference: who am I delighting? A reflexive verb would take care of this question. The act of reflecting as a way to make things visible.

PROCESSING

I took up knitting because all along, while I try, it seems as though I'm doing it wrong. I probably am. There is a piece always dangling in the middle. It's growing. And it goes from one needle to the other. Like a spiral, the same but not. The repetition of passing from one to the other and back and forward and insert, loop around, insert, drop. The risk of letting go of a stitch. Pull tight to compensate on the other side. Feel how I hold more and more in my hands, how I release. It's in the maybe between right and wrong, between try again or keep going—amidst all that, I don't care. It is and I am.

WADI

There are afternoons that come before lunch
and never get to the point when the sun
colors most beautiful. The link
from moment to instance flows in the
creek—the one that might dry out each summer,
the one that remembers a possibility, the one
that is really two. I know exactly where
I am when I see the veins
through my skin. This is how I work.
Like fruit that is never ripe enough
until it's too late, until it's tomorrow
turned into delicious.

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