

let your eye stray stimulated as the tongue leaves no lasting impression of color . . .

to suit what purpose  
our existence from now on    an acquired meaning    like the sun rising  
in some distant place

the energy of deliberation  
and invention found in

containing  
the existence of that other one

and just what one saw when one looked at  
anything

really    looked at anything

when you brought me into your world  
i was justified and saved

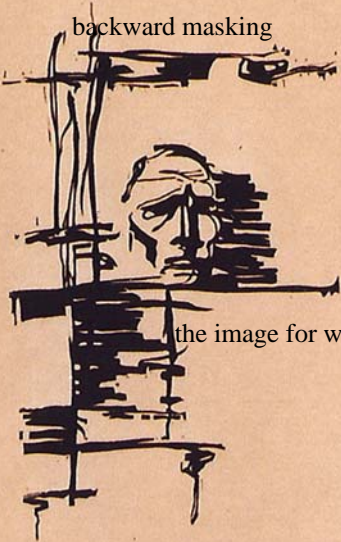
isn't that after all the bright side of falling short



the box and no one else  
coming or going into this place or it was unison this untying the prosody on which  
you can hang your hat

to surrender one another to succeed  
this is no error in opposition a suggestion of

backward masking seeing as seeing

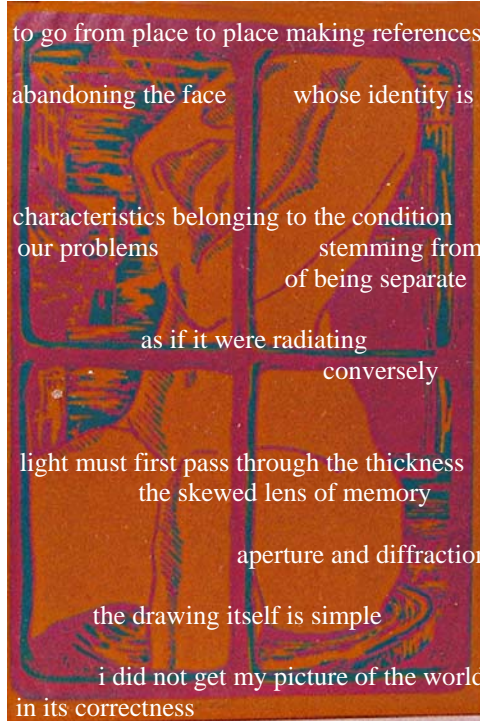


the image for what it is

(soon forgotten) the visual attraction of flame runs fast and still faster the figure seen in the mirror is not real . . .

the way things come in  
not even sure you've noticed

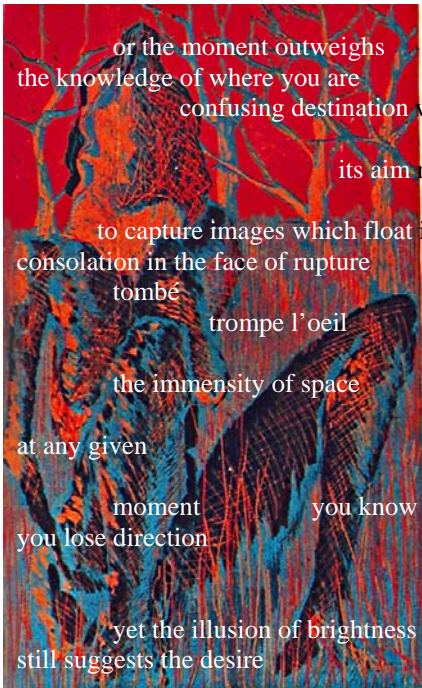
the fact of your absence    the focal point    dropping breadcrumbs  
to the way back



we have met here before

it never happened

the eye seduced itself  
the way a round arch can give  
the effect of dimension or a reversal occurring



or the moment outweighs  
the knowledge of where you are  
confusing destination with location  
its aim not at imitation but conception  
to capture images which float in the azure of memory  
consolation in the face of rupture  
tombe trompe l'oeil  
the immensity of space internalizing in all directions  
at any given  
moment you know enough to stop before  
you lose direction  
yet the illusion of brightness  
still suggests the desire

to go forward

separating light from human content

the conception of an image  
the abstract removal of myself  
which embraces a certain thing  
which has no sense in itself  
which has no subject  
which means absolutely nothing  
from the logical point of view

but



if i am to believe my eyes  
then what is there to prevent the world around me  
from ceasing to exist

to come in from the outside  
to go  
to the center shadows on the ground so soft  
a black the burned eye  
refreshes in them

or

it is response and not perspective  
polished until there are cracks

and you have become efficient in inventing shadows

no ideas only surfaces, no surfaces only words, no words only textures, no textures only  
contingent connections . . .

what i'm trying to describe is that it is impossible to get out of your skin into somebody else's . . .

-----life is not a personal thing

to sing about an object into place

a floor plan

how you would

change the scale

as when the weight rinses out the burned

firecracker

water

everything white is turning

i did what i needed to do

are you not furious

-----there is a third dimension to the story

it's in the turning of the weathervane

and this has nothing to do with calmness

to get lost in a surface that has no patience

you stand the figures  
in a circle and behind  
like the bed sheet indentations of someone who has left  
each one a person in the light that shines through  
each letting flicker as it slips

i was the sea

in the house where the noise started

a thousand miles of it

i forgot

i forgot i forgot

to ask you everything

-----  
look at your hands  
in the shape of a tree branch  
body steering the mind  
out of the way  
the force compels the character  
makes a zero of things  
leaves behind fragments  
trumpeting into an empty drain  
you see that split between atoms  
say i'm bleeding on my own body  
but i can't speak outside the things i mean  
i mean this place has failed us  
states have a history  
you gather something you leave something you've been hauling with you behind  
it is hard to stumble across a fictitious version of yourself  
confusing the movement with the dancing  
of course you love the monsters  
how the sky turned white how everybody froze  
i suffer mornings most of all  
relying on signals for comfort  
you would feel negative towards a square of paper  
but i like the sound of that word kite  
we look up to discard the weight

was that a possibility :: perhaps it was just the quality of shifting  
the silver strips away the trees and sleep just doesn't taste  
the same the problem with warmth is that i feel it too i am  
burning the things that people forcefully let go

*you're floating through your own thoughts  
and you can pick out what you need*

think about where you're from  
figure out who you are and what you've done  
if you don't know who you are and what you've done  
is this the right one thing you want

*the dirty projectors progress in spirals*

i wish we had rituals about these things i wish it were still victorian  
times and we could go from black to gray to mauve to pink

the way that salt struggles to take on a life of its own

yes everything we're doing is about going forward

*but tonight when we are on the water the water will look like jade*

the dirty projectors progress in spirals

the mind fills in individually to the gaps that make the hold  
there is no hook or wisdom that makes believe  
to tell us

here is how we craft our rules

the move is always more powerful than the thing moved  
you draw the line in some strange place  
breathe in the smoke  
the cohesion of ends to beginnings beginnings to ends

how does a sequence continue

to make a deal with the past

the photos will tell us

never fall in love with the potential  
it's never the utopia it pretends to be

*but i love that song i wish i'd written it*

erica lewis – statement

to deal with distance time place memory. constantly turning the screw just a bit each time, with each piece and then perhaps carrying themes and lines from one project to the next. but then also to take the same thing in a different direction. so, then there is a sense of pattern or even evolution...

*camera obscura* uses visuals to deal with perception and memory. i found photos and slides of mark's artwork from 25 years ago and decided to work with them - how seeing and perception change according to what you know about the image. for example, how you think you know a person and then you see parts of their past that don't fit in with how you know them in the present, and how you reconcile all of those perceptions.

*murmur in the inventory* completely strips the visuals away and is the first project that i have written that does not contain any visual art - a departure that, i think, has yielded some interesting textual results. it is a project about fragmentation and how sometimes you are your own ghost. there is a lot about distance in there, and i think a lot of visual imagery even when there's not actually an image on the page. the floating and the distance (the first line of the page and space between lines). it's about the bits and pieces and how you put them together or don't. and the many voices you hear or don't. and the coming together and falling apart of things. the real and the non-reality, and the line between and where to cut.

*memory box* deals with the disorder of memory, specifically in relation to geography. how things may seem concrete in one place and how they may change, become more fluid or loose with time and distance, in a different place. the interplay between what is happening and what is left behind. and how those things get mixed up. how you're always coming and going and leaving things and people and memories behind, or trying to move "forward."

to deal with distance time place memory is ongoing. how time and place play with memory. what you remember and are you remembering at all or creating an entirely new memory? how the things that we do not resolve often find their way back in. so then there is a continuum...

bios

erica lewis is a fine arts publicist in San Francisco, where she curated the Canessa Gallery Reading Series. her work has appeared or is forthcoming in P-Queue, New American Writing, Little Red Leaves, Parthenon West Review, Ur Vox, Shampoo, Cricket Online Review, alice blue, BOOG CITY, Word For/Word, Work, and Try, among others. collaborations with artist Mark Stephen Finein include the chapbook *excerpts from camera obscura* (Etherdome Press) and full-length book project *the precipice of jupiter* (Queue Books). a full-length version of *camera obscura* is forthcoming from BlazeVox Books.

Mark Stephen Finein earned his BFA in Printmaking from State University College Buffalo. Over the years, his creative focus has shifted to include music composition and performance. A few years of world travel led him to San Francisco where he's been since 1994. He has never stopped doing artwork, however, and has recently reinvigorated his work by eschewing the limiting nature of representationalism for pure abstraction, while adhering to his vitalistic foundations. Book projects include *the precipice of jupiter* (collaboration with poet erica lewis, queue books) and *camera obscura* (collaboration with poet erica lewis, forthcoming from BlazeVox); his work can also be seen in Little Red Leaves and Boog City, among others.