

**Jesse Nissim**

**So much of a sky is systems circulating**

I am lost facing outward  
from a tree I am  
leaf light and not  
caring to be found  
I walk for hours like  
that not worrying  
filtering the feel  
of my organs  
here is a warning  
there another  
of successive threats  
I am in a kind of  
world that resides  
next to the world  
clouds live at  
a periphery  
are referred to as  
calculations evidence  
less absorbed  
more scattered

## Comfort is dangerous

thought is  
more direction than location  
the trees from their sky      shades  
not shading themselves      edgeless  
rolling    flat    acres

having been warned—  
that which    you walk away from  
follows    which seems  
a reason to slip through  
a sideways    reality—

thought is one hot  
sun roaring through  
a glacier    no thing seasonal  
can stay solid—    that  
kind of heat    that thickens  
a shifty sky—

having said I hope— I  
can— when whatever is  
coming comes  
I will will my innately bodily  
will to remake  
its very instant  
a body it is  
full of w(e)at(h)er

## **The Matter of Yielding 2**

(with phrases from Gaston Bachelard)

Where are the animals of feeling?

When faced with the precipice of my face  
will I even look? I who have handled  
a covered ravine and am no longer suitable  
for family. They say I have handled it  
not uncovered it. Everywhere I go, the grass  
has been mowed, a bird is talking to another bird,  
the rest is wild. I sit down on a bench. The weeds  
are skinny ladders not straining, the stick on the grass  
looks like a name for something I should know.

My name for myself sags against a wall,  
it is looking to give back areas of being.

My I is a house alone in its light.

## Thought or False Thought

“Imagine yourself as transparent as glass, and everything that is inside you can be seen by the environment that you are in.” —Cooley Windsor, *Futurefarmers Rosary: A Series of Spiritual Exercises for Perceiving the Soul*

1

inside me

is a pine castle

a slope of snow

outside, the brightest lamp

melts everything in its wake.

inside, a vast darkness

sponges so much warmth

2

a thought is

a hypothetical thing

numerous and having mass

an imitation of the sun

a small piece of ground

a portion formerly conceivable

carried out from the coast

in shafts of light

3

whether a forest or fortune, a thought

is a threat, appearing as a body

a weak remnant  
deflecting, fleeing

a body intercepting light

4  
if you can be seen  
you are more than a shadow

and you imagine cement  
at the bottom

or you might imagine a cloud

5  
*this is an offering* to a large other  
an unoccupied space masses its wind  
pulls up the bottom of everything  
pulling it like a bedskirt, out from under

6  
whether hypothetical or sunlit  
whether fabricated or original

how might a thought absorb  
all of this attention

as if a lens crept back  
through its own amplification  
a tunnel of itself it would travel  
by holding breath

7

*imagine yourself as transparent*  
*as glass*, a watery surface  
a body might pass through

you're right in thinking it might be  
someone else's body. you're right  
in thinking it might be yours.

8

breathe however you must breathe  
take in the air outside of you  
bring the farthest things all the way in

stitch the seams together  
although you can't see what is approaching  
and the two materials don't match

drive along this way attentively

in this act of inclusion, gather your edge  
also against your shallows

## **I Mark the Dark and Darker Thoughts**

I mark the dark and darker thoughts as moving  
boats. Targets that won't hold the violence of language.  
The dark at the center of me tunnels for the next  
open space. I am waiting for a bird to land  
to mark the solid from the air because my thinking  
thinks it needs a surface. Thoughts don't know  
where to land. If you think words are more like flags  
or balloons attached to specs of substanceless  
objects that are always falling like dust, I need you  
to touch a sidewalk or a tree. And I need to be uncertain  
as a lake entering a storm so the magnet between  
the tree and the earth comes through me.

## Sorrow became mine—

*“To ride a” “mechanical”  
“contrivance” “in the darkness” “To be steeped in” “the authority”  
“of” “another’s mind”*

—Alice Notley, *the descent of Alette*)

i could be an eyeball floating  
or a mind floating  
a mind endlessly laughing  
lungs glistening, all appetite  
eyes like a lake to  
grab, collect, receive  
i could be a blank field  
a new set of cells, eyes  
belonging to another  
whose mind does not  
cross itself like the  
greens of a dense  
grass, many times  
so as to green out the light  
of the sun, so as to lose  
the difference between  
sky and ground

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Jesse Nissim is the author of *Day cracks between the bones of the foot* (Furniture Press Books, forthcoming in 2015), *Where They Would Never Be Invited* (Black Radish Books, forthcoming in 2016), as well as several chapbooks. Her poems have recently appeared in *H-NGM-N*, *New American Writing*, *La Petite Zine*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Shampoo*, *Spoon River Poetry Review* and *Sixth Finch*.