From her notebooks

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From her notebooks Mike Kalish / Marthe Reed
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Cover image: *Elegy (1)* Mike Kalish. Vitreous enamel on copper; encaustic & soot on canvas.

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*(from) what I remember* by Mike Kalish
All other poems by Marthe Reed
*I remember the inevitability of ashes* appeared in *Otoliths* 29.06.2014.

All collages (paper), by Marthe Reed
Mirror (2017)
you came and I was crazy for you
and you cooled my mind that burned with longing  -- Sapho
Tanka

for Mike

(2000/2004 Perth/Lafayette)

The crickets call and call
for one who does not come.
Their song was mine
until today:
you’ve returned like spring’s
long-awaited blossoms.
(from) what I remember

1
Parrots come to strip the rose stems
Scrape the quince
Lick the grevillea that smells of honey
Burnt or starting to spoil

2
Her back turned for sleep. Her back
a scar, downy hair, smooth curve of pelvis.
At the border of dreams she
Kicks, nails hard and sharp.
MAMMALS (yard, cemetery, trees)

- whitetail deer
- raccoon
  - from Powhaten
  - or a Proto-Algonquian root *ahrah- koon-em, meaning “the one who rubs, scrubs and scratches with its hands”
- eastern cottontail rabbit
- meadow vole
  - taken by cat
- eastern gray tree squirrel
- eastern black tree squirrel
  - a mutation
  - racing shadow on the gray barked oak
- eastern chipmunk
  - from the Ottawa word ajidamoohnh
  - or the Ojibwe word ajidamoo, “one who descends trees headlong”
  - headlong in-and-over the slates
- whistlepig
  - aka woodchuck, groundhog, marmot, monax “the digger”
  - across the way running to its burrow
  - across the way a clutch of kits scurrying into cover
  - across the way fierce on its hind legs hissing

BIRDS (yard, cemetery, sky)

- house sparrow
- tree sparrow
- dark-eyed junco
- goldfinch
- housefinch
  - “rosefinch”
  - eastern migrant
    - “Hollywood finches” of the 1940’s
rose-breasted grosbeak
white-breasted nuthatch
american robin
  hunting earthworms red
  annelid hermaphrotites
  cheerup cheerup cheerup -tuk
carolina wren
red-winged blackbird
mourning dove
  sipping water run-off flowing down the drive
  walking over neighbor’s flat roof
  head-in head-out, parallax
gray catbird
  small thornbush bird singing while hidden
  slate colored mockingbird
  “of the carolinas”
cowbird
american crow
  iridescent
  mobbing at sunset over the trees
  susceptible to west-nile
european starling
yellow-throated vireo (?)
red-tailed hawk (flying)
herring gull (flying)
northern flicker (across the way)
  knocking from the high trees
downy woodpecker (across the way)
  knocking from the high trees
wild turkey (across the way)
  rushing rushing
turkey vulture (across the way)
  sunning wings spread among the graves
  two days running

TREES (yard cemetery street)

Acer acer acer maple ||
hedge black amur
Japanese
Norwegian
paperbark
red
sugar
tamarack, hamatack
  “wood for snowshoes”
  Algonquin  eastern
  larch
copper beech
American beech
cucumber tree
  northern  magnolia
  blue magnolia
  through southern Ontario
  shining tree
rowan tree (orange
  berries
  red berries)
yellowwood
basswood
red mulberry
white mulberry
shagbark  hickory
bitternut  hickory
black walnut
butternut
  northern  catalpa (whorled leaf
  cigar tree
white oak
willow oak
black oak
red oak
scarlet oak
silver oak
burr oak
chestnut oak
pin oak  shumard oak
shingle oak
horse chestnut
    conker tree
    beergarden tree
    pink
    horse chestnut fringed petals with red or yellow spots
red and yellow buckeye
bush buckeye
Ohio buckeye

coffeetree Kentucky
coffeetree toxic
cabinetmakers carpenters
hemlock pruche du Canada

waxyfruit hawthorn
white ash and white fir white birch and red cedar

Osage orange
flowering
dogwood (spring white blossoms russet leaves in autumn

crab apple sweet crabapple

Norwegian spruce (tonewood) spruce-beer for scurvy
Dawn Redwood meta
sequoia
deciduous bright
pale green foxy-red in fall

amid the eastern urban woodlands
Time as dissociable from space

(March, 2011: Lafayette)


Interrogating its absence. Dust flies about her ankles and calves, the rake scratching at fallen almonds, heaping them into rows. Windrows. Wind. An exacerbated distrust. Neither the past nor the present entirely visible. Whipping the wind. Her body. (Body). Bent to its task. An imaginary construction, her hips and thighs, lines in red. Her back. A sacrificial contract. Subverts its— The explosive return of the imaginary zone. A chimera. Lash in hand bent to his work.

which is

a pause which is
which waiting, a breath

roses dampen the earth petals
sweetening the air

sun petals
a perfume or

rhythm pauses
falls

petals beading
a texture established by opposition

(he) falls an opening
a line a crushed flower

petals dampen
her skin

sweetening (she falls and does not

pause on petals crushed
memory scores a line

in opposition petalled memory
opening or establishing a

line (the play of a scent under her

tongue a fine beading
a pause or breath
which is not waiting over her skin petals, he a scored breath

there is no opposition in this waiting defers an established rhythm

(he inhales a scent of crushed petals flesh which is memory

(his tongue cannot alliterate these pleasures) a pause or flower which opens memory which is hers a taste for heat the sun a fine beading over her skin a pause (petalled which is which falls is a petalled rhythm alliterates desire
Two Sisters

(May, 17 2000; Perth)

1
dugong and the moon (sisters), two. lily roots and wild lotus, sisters. dugong and moon digging. fruit. lily and wild sisters. two moons, digging. lotus, lotus fruit and dugong. wild sisters and the moon. knee-deep in green, green stems. water. lily sisters, two dugongs adrift in the moon (water)
two women (sisters). gather lily roots and lotus (wild lotus), a game. lilies and lotus. where a game (she) looses them, lotus. abandoning day. tossed into the sky (sky). sister game: lily and lotus fruit. a game – evening star, evening rises (copper body). moon’s. gold and fat. moon follow lotus into night

2
thin, thin moon. one (sister) thins, grows thin. in the sky like lotus, a game. lotus sister (night) sister. moon wanes, looses herself becomes. (moon) mere bones. moon. wild lotus moon looses her bones (lotus bones) into the sea. green sea and lotus stems. she (one). two sisters: dugong and the moon
dugong, knee-deep in green, and the moon. dugong digs (lily sister) wild lilies. lily roots and wild lotus. (two) wild moons and lotus. eat. moon eats. dugong and moon. listless sea moon. grows fat (moon) and wide. lily root sea, sisters. wild moon and dugong, wide in a listless sea. sisters

3
red planet’s twin (moon), but two sisters. dugong and moon. two (red and the moon) sisters. moon rises, looses herself. anew. red planet (abandoning day) abandon. grown round and gold moon floats, one floats in (air).
inexorably drawn (pull of the other). floats. in evening (sky). one.

one. dugong, wild lily sister (one) calls. a rhythm. lotus sister, adrift in green, green lotus stems and the sea. abandoned to green, gone wild. wild lotus calls flung from the sea. (wild lily calls and lotus), sky lotus. dug from the sea (wild lily sister) and flung (dugong’s). mantras to the season of rain
October

autumn seeps into my skin
light increasingly slant:
a poultice

sucking ache out of bone
and blood,
leaves

scatter into
corners of the garden
initiating their secret

mouldy deaths
thought too whispers away
into the early light

shaking down the bared
boughs of trees
no more than this:

silence of black loam
crumbling into itself
a gathering of seeds deep underneath
Two Fragments

from Invocation of the Space (April 1985: Providence)

prayer    incantation    dream
  garlands of hibiscus
  around the ocean cradles,   bouys
  blue water surround and   rain on us
--there is little to drink

Here      drink this
fermented blood    fermented milk
  it tastes of this place
  we are the land we inhabit:
   kangaroo      eucalypt     desert

...

from Singers of Jenny Lind (1983; San Diego)
...

  whispers of men
  scratch out of their sleep like dogs
panting in the shade women
  tend roasts pare apples
  pacify children singers of Jenny Lind
Humming sea (2015)
Rivers (2013)
Bride price (2012)
Subterfuge (2011)
Geometries of fire (2010)
I remember the inevitability of ashes
(August 10, 2014: Syracuse)

I remember the clemencies and clotting heat of summer, her impossibly long hair sheared away, secure in an ivory box.

I remember blood eschews paradise.

I remember drowning amid the labyrinth and the secret potency of drawers.

I remember flowers venture everything, nothing.

I remember ricefields and lakefish, chilis afloat like sullen gems.

I remember acacias’ fierce refusal of shade abjures solace, how night resides in Gaudi’s profligate geometry.

I remember the inevitability of ashes.

I remember the seas, the milk and choler of the southern coast.

I remember an island requites its single alleyway, night jasmine exceeding the tolling of bells.

I remember his laughter, fountain waking the air of our rooms.
I remember the audacity of daylilies and the cat’s tongue.

I remember cicada-song is also the swain’s.

I remember the rupture of woody red husks and white flesh, of rojak and counterfeits.
I remember the beach-break and the break further out.

I remember how the sea burns like a winter lamp.

I remember gardenias, the porch heavy with scent, their furled petals, dark leaves.

I remember you and forget nearly everything else.

I remember the failure of recognition, its blue silence drowning us.

I remember your mouth.

I remember its heat, the sun burning away grief.

I remember these sentences, how they will stop, queer caskets split open and fled like shooting stars.

I remember and refuse to stop.