



*the last will be stone, too*  
(excerpts)

Deborah Poe



/pip(ə)l/



## Death Mix

*all lines from Paul Celan*

*leaf-green heart of shadow looks at itself  
there comes a stillness, comes this storm*

*which crossing awakens?*

*snow-bed under us both  
sky of paris, giant autumn crocus*

*is that a ferry?*

*we dig a grave in the breezes  
black milk of daybreak*

*I see through it down to the bed*

*stone, wherever you look, stone  
in the passages, passages*

*let the grey animal in*

*O one, o none, o no one, o you*

## Don't Let the Stars Keep You Tangled Up

Don't let the stars keep you tangled up.

I pass below, un-orchidaceous. Not invisible (wool)

I render the snow. Back to frozen tender—

between trees before bare sky; where I spell or crook.

## The Mourners

some, hooded, hide their faces hands inside their sleeves

some, uncovered, wipe their tears, brood in fabric's fold

mourning lasts for months; ~~loss persists~~

this contaminated gloom-gesture-moaning bridge

open mouths, too, impelled to sing, or scream



## Tod und Frau

*object exactly the size of any space  
we occupy, shadowed against  
a shadow as it is, if this is  
to be being and to be being  
in it irremediably without  
refuse materiality how  
do we remain silent, left  
for deaf, how do we occupy  
silence, how do we leave, do we*  
Jen Hofer, from *One*

muscle, bones, sinew—back's arch leg's fierce tendons  
toes grounded behind the body—first figure, Mother—  
as if to reject apparition or sprint, knee lunged forward

skeleton—mocking monster  
leg bone defies the lurch  
arms bound behind by scaffolding  
costas stacked upon skinless figure

second leg arrests Mother's pitch  
head reared back, the abnormal stretch  
neck bared to the inevitable

child you climb a desperate branch—torso  
of the body—hands reach above breasts  
this gaze's impossibility

shadow of three bodies, one violent mass—  
your small right foot in the resilient light

## Les Reveries du Promeneur Solitaire

The sky is a horse. Or if you say the sky is a horse, you could say the sky is the teal underbelly of ocean. But to say that sky is teal underbelly of ocean, you could just as well be the bowler hat. Colors theorize the world seeing. A well-dressed man dreaming of death presents not merely a solitary walker but blurs lines between living and dead. Would you recognize your loneliness less fragile? There is, after all, a bridge. You could promenade by the river, which could be also a road. Walk alongside low-lit path as if this body was not levitating behind. Your dead body, lacking dislocation (tongue and teeth) has lips. Your dead body has bald, alien head. Your dead body has four visible ribs. Maybe you fall asleep, ceiling-less, standing. Look back, and you might count the ribs, might inappropriately touch the lips. That bond's arbitrariness. Name the painting, and a dream shapes the dusk. Name the image, and night is bound. But you stare ahead at acacias. More like the darkness than this tone behind. Light body, eyes closed. Being just beyond.



## The Prop Dances

ocean or air?

grass instinct?

the economy of gifts

feather headdress

cage with light

commonly the sound of action

water over stones

her hands movement of river between fathers

between feathers

mass balance, stone in palm

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The following art pieces about death were points of departure for the poems included here: Osip Mandelstam's "Mounds of human heads are wandering into the distance" and title from Courtney Tidwell's album *Don't Let the Stars Keep Us Tangled Up; The Mourners*, Jean de la Huerta, Antoine le Moiturier, from the Tomb of Due John the Fearless and Margaret of Barvara, 1443-1456; *Death and the Woman* (*Tod und Frau*), Käthe Kollwitz, 1910; *The Prop Dances and Regions*, Molissa Fenley and Dancers; *Les Reveries du Promeneur Solitaire*, Rene Magritte, 1926.

Thanks to Soapstone Writing Residency, which awarded me the time and space in July of 2010 to write many of these drafts. Gratitude also to Soham Patel, for sharing that time and space with me.

## Notes

Excerpts from *the last will be stone, too* were produced in a four-part edition of 152 (each part a “book” of 38) for Dusie Kollektiv No. 5, 2011: /pip(ə)l/, /pleis/, /ænəm(ə)l/ and /gəʊst/.

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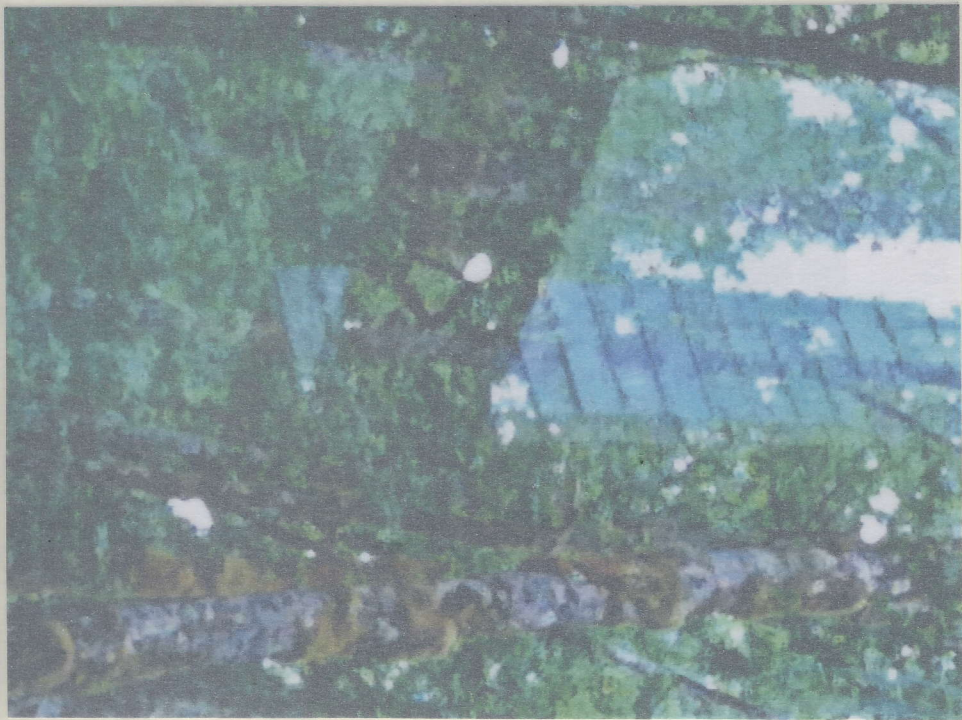
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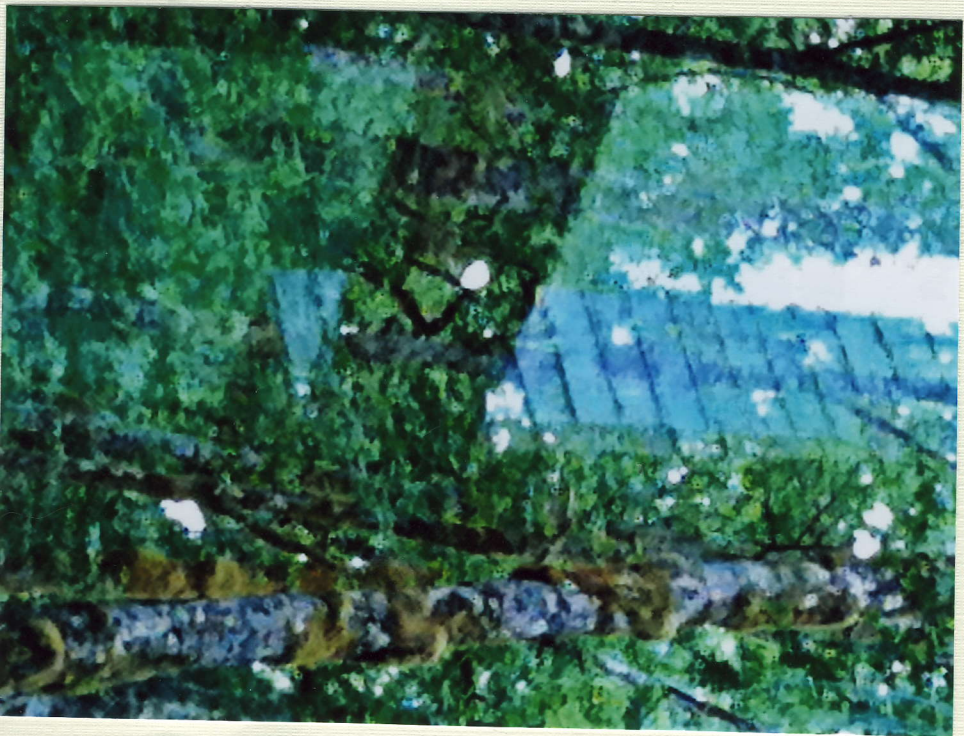


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## **A Lot Named Marooned**

A lot named marooned lingers.

Language and meander when geographies yesterday. The fragments all map.

No home in Out West and grandmother and thrift Mississippi map 25 cents a lot covers.

A lot light leaves traces.

Heavy of heavy but the abandon russet sepia auburn destruction a russet sepia vacated,  
vacated from top to bottom.

If separate then stannic and nowhere drawn in where a hole shapes meaning.

A retrieved loss to confabulate, twilight and constellation. A chimney an empty house a  
canvas a spitting can and nearly the better silence decay.

Farther from nostalgia room, farther and a house divided against itself stands. Horror vacui  
less so that voiced and voiced is filling.

I face her cotton. Conjuring a parakeet, breathing heard walking, a lot talking blues nothing.

Sing out sing out in the cotton and really fraught in the life it's for.

**Foundation, Choctaw Street, 2010**

To think of naming's violence, retrospection's weight  
To think of time, all that was taken  
To think of today (pale blue sky)

Have your shadows relieved the blood path?  
Have you gathered the future vertical broken seam?  
Have you welcomed those new constructions?

To think what living braced before your migration  
before city became something other  
Then to think you and I did nothing  
To think how we remained fleeting darkness

Today pavement's white heat memory  
The past, clarity's brief pockets  
If the future is this fissure river, your life lines elsewhere



## North, East, South, West

A 25 foot metal face mindfucks the distance

Vertigo is not the fear of falling

I resist the urge to jump

Good afternoon, negative volumes

miles

Sunk in the ground

Steel-cast

Weatherings shadowed, downpour aside

A hipster's bright green legs rearrange nomenclature

Sculptures mobilize longing

I don't see four forms unarming

Iron

Must place the hatch at that end

Expanse

Untitled, 1959

welded steel canvas black fabric soot and coil  
across steel armature fabric stretches, twists and winds, fastens of  
three-dimensional [conveyor belts] rise to curves, sutures, aerodynamic sag  
between textural richness and nothingness  
round-faced relief sculpture of river god lurking  
seeing is privileged but so is feeling  
organic and machine                      sensual and geometric  
wire ends protruding  
soft oppositional language sharp  
other sense organs have one function but eyes have two                      to see and to weep

| black hole | the final separation |

| to walk into unknown center | to witness what silence can do |



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The following art pieces about death were points of departure for the poems included here: *Empty Houses*, Noah Saterstrom, 2010, after Gertrude Stein; *Foundation, Choctaw Street*, Sarah Van Der Beek, 2010, after Walt Whitman; *North, East, South, West*, Michael Heizer, 1967/2002, after John Godfrey; *Untitled*, Lee Bontecou, 1959.

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## Pelican

there is a simple way to scoop a glob into the hands of buddha when you refrain from unwholesome imagine how it would be for wildlife attached to death and my skin heavy with oily compassionate toward sentient beings the pushback against feelings of helplessness not excluding the pelican glued to land or composite desiring anything you seek the emotion in a geyser way that can't catch and the children ask 'have they fixed the hole, have they stopped it?' and there's nothing to say, day after day after day after day.

**: Method**

*after Norma Cole*

*photosensitive paper between light and dark  
ghostly silhouettes float in space*

Hint extinction

Bug after bug

A statement

Where grass is shadowed

Reading the signs: manifestations

on manufactured landscape:

traces of specimens:

ask, though, about summons

of death: you understand

obviously: witnessing disappearances while

negotiating the gulf: ruins or registers

familiarized by what subjects expose:

still in the cool or exiting

gesture: pressed between

cicada and firefly: how we encode

what we keep.

## Little Water Fowl

*one man's trash is another man's treasure*

Rebecca Szeto

there could be a blue filter over it all  
claws crunched grasping thin air  
reptilian arch  
insect ache in the green extension  
raw lines  
those attachments could take flight

but the center will glow  
light at the stomach's feathers  
the head so small, barely discernible:  
brown crown, white close-cropped,  
burgundy at the beak—back to gravel  
if words were attention to ground

you can almost see wind  
just above the skin  
reminder of making amends  
neurodetoxif of fossilized repression



friction and futile cycling  
nervous system removed

a higher pattern forms

## Animals

year bears the name of the dog

animals of/ not

of this world grounded

in meat

peak-ed bones

scatter post-feast

nothing yawn-like

mouths taut

bark framed by teeth

(a knife silence slice)

long wavelength

wall aged

in sun menace festivity

stout black bodies

infrared glow  
red shadows.

bone geometries.

bone lines.

black ribcage.

constellation of fates

signs

sorcerers transformed

*nabual*  
*buay chivo*

witch dog prescience

guides to the land of the dead



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/gaust/

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**Lifeline**

*for L.A.M.*

not a planchette point  
but particular crease in palm

lifeline from various angles  
no line un-intersected  
beyond the tangible triangle  
the sharp, round echo  
squares off

when the clairvoyant pauses  
bearings more phosphorescent than bleak  
among axes a signal or harness

back to the brick wall's brink



**Séance**  
*for M.G.*

If I accept the word premonition, I am no longer entirely a spectator. I myself become the fish, for the duration of a silver flash, and the water functions as a source into which I aspire to have clear vision.

Taking a seance as basis, the defenders of hauntings place their hands upon a table, as if they themselves are possessed. That of making ghost apparent—having itself become the village.

Similarly in the case of spirits within the frame: that of apparent element—filament and fingers of the not so. Having become the light, they say, look at the medium.

Channel's rise above evocation table.

No way to tell whether the communicating spirit is who it professes to be.

## Conic Ice End

And yet, at the Conic Ice End, at every spice (its color staged along her path), there is a woman he fails to mention behind the mirror spying a tube of lipstick that has fallen on the floor not to use on the lips which speak to the passersby (the tailor, the pianist, the pig) but to write on the wooden walls, "Darling, graffiti is to memory as duck is to down" to no one but the reader who at this moment stirs the oil with a snore, so pleased to offer it to the night which is slipping into successful transitions memory of sorbet-colored sky brought down to the day by a great darkness often misunderstood except by the glittering-world man on the horse heading down the path who looks up to the graffitessie and nods toward her though he's blind and possessed by many thoughts like the one he carries with goosebumps across his arms: "In Conic Ice End, village of mourning cloaks, time and space collect fluorescent-edged and pasha it's the bridges we imagine matter between no man's land our ghosts building infrastructures from the invisible flight."

**Les Feuilles Mortes**

*for K*

what there is not, love, is sun  
but memories' casualties  
curtain billows  
only for slight light to rift  
along with few autumn leaves  
even golder with their intrusion

a rug both plant and animal  
you rise above—  
chest's five arches open—  
oh the androgynous fashion



the way one is drawn in

sitting one foot forward

cleavage of body and matter

I wind the yarn tied invisibly to the center of you

what breaks out is birds

faceless grey shadow

moss pockets memory floor to ceiling

walls semi-soundproofed

curtains motion soundless

noise a bloodshed recollection

leaves admit and defy at once

ghost disclosures

continue this conversation

on empty chair, bench, mantel

in the heart of the room,

I pulled at the center of you,

and life came spilling out.

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