



SYMPTOM OF COLOR

MICHELLE NAKA PIERCE

Michelle Naka Pierce is the author of several books and chapbooks, including *She, A Blueprint* with collage art by Sue Hammond West (BlazeVOX, forthcoming 2011). *Symptom of Color* is an excerpt from *Continuous Frieze Bordering [Red]*, which documents the migratory patterns of the hybrid as she travels the floating borders in Rothko's Seagram murals. Pierce is associate professor and incoming director of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University. Currently, she lives in Colorado with the poet Chris Pusateri.

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I am other to myself precisely at the place where I expect to be myself.
—Judith Butler



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As you sleep metaphorically, you try to understand the dorsal aspect of this once removed zone, just beyond the city. Underground you hear submerged. Hold yourself underwater, placed ever so gently in the hand, in the inner ear, you wonder if motion sickness is a loss of equilibrium between center and cinder, for instance. For the first time, you begin clinamen. As if the focal point were always in motion or absent from

the body. Though not your first crossing, you are on the outside, inside languages not easily recognized, and the sounds are muffled, as if like an uncompromising narrative. When a nervous twitch begins again or a loss of self. Much of your time is spent examining little movements, to feel your age in the arch, Achilles, and left fin. In the unexamined conversation. You meet everyone you know in letters or at the long

syllable's edge: to foreground the aspirated consonants, the dripping
If objects contain the infinite, then you are only a shade of red. Thirst
to point and define the margins. As oxygen is taken in, a nebula appears:
occurs along the cervical vertebrae, where C4—C7 protrude, exposing a
red meets yellow meets sky. Scatter effect. You are living what some
Racial fluidity, as you know it, is a myth. You are in place and displaced

vowels. The page is wet and moisture distorts meaning and vision.
approximates water. How the body yields and harnesses speech so as
trace the pattern so the anxiety held can dissipate. A visceral reaction
vulnerable contact point. The hues rise and you visualize a scene where
call a polycontinental transexperience. Only no one really calls it that.
simultaneously. The result of being horizontal in a vertical city. The

terrain here asks you to map the fractals that occur naturally. How can sometimes translucent feathers. Can you reclaim “mongrel”? Strain consumption, and the museum now resembles an all-you-can-eat buffet. gas converts to liquid? Condensation takes on new significance, as you already in a state of flux from an ethnic standpoint. As the daughter of mother, but the union. Not the union exactly, but the war and the

you convey the floating border, its edges, which are sometimes smudged the semantic residue off? Tourists here are on a steady diet of art How can you correct your traveler status if you don’t understand how unpack, not only your things, but your national identity, which is an immigrant, you’ve had barriers established for you. Not by your occupation that followed. How to be eastern when due west, in a city

As oxygen is taken in, eight sharp breaths. You are nowhere

near this tint in pattern, nowhere near the agitation. Autumn

that sets in burnt orange. Your skin, in the end, is a similar shade of comes redness; however, repression isn't always marked by intention. damn rainy city, which reminds you of your mother's, in which you will different in the corners under the same shade, under a protested focus. result of crisis. Winter glides along the force of sacrifice. All room in deformed, except when a child. Then neighborhood teenage girls want

is held isolate: indistinct edge against the edge of inquiry.

foreign. Change is likely to underscore little difference. Out of kindness It is even more hurt than that. A single image. Copper, dust, and this always be a gaijin. You are other overcoming otherness. You are Your self-exam reveals a macula, which may be the result of age or the shadow. The immigrant is seen as exotic, but the offspring ugly and to walk you around the block in a stroller, as though you were a doll,

Figureless outline. Scatter. You decelerate to reconcile the

which gives you reoccurring nightmares about being kidnapped. one will see. In this unkempt sentence, in this lattice of vagueness, ordinary color. A neglected Tuesday. You are not that which is not timetable of when to eat, shit, and catch the train, but never is there meet yourself in another country: especially when you feel that you lobe, and you seep into that sticky mass. You desire to soothe the

geography, to reverse intermittent segments that reiterate

They want to strip you of your clothes [when you are twelve] where no lies violence. Stain upon stain upon tender withering letter. You are an white. But then again, maybe you are: fucking hyphen. You make a enough time to pack. Because how do you know what to bring as you haven't quite met yourself in your own. A clot occurs in the temporal discoloration, the wall of red, the lack of breathing room when standing

grief. In this language: pain and a dissonant pace.

inside searching for exits, which are painted over. Someone, somewhere compressed in synapses. Skin lighter than. Darker than. A tint off. The dot of paint. That fleck pitched by a stray bristle. That water damage. yourself, back track along a preliminary direction, and lose your way. of home becomes absorbed, then deposited along the riverbed. Your peeling off its object. Separation is difficult under any degree of order.

must understand the loss and the shallow water that hovers. Your codes hue: all consuming in this delusion you call continuance. You are that Some think “border incident” is war, but it’s also when you cross When you can no longer stand under the deluge of selves, when the idea “struggle is to see [and be seen] from both perspectives at once.” Color April is here, somewhere, and outside are disposable buttercups. It is the

liminal recognized in trellis. These seasons gather speed, then disperse.
of equation, not ordinary. There were no rooms but room and a limit.
space within was a space within. Your remnants watermarked in high
between your breasts do not indicate foreplay, but quote “a random
You unthread the hem: reconfigure the shades between reds. All this to
Your presence in this absence complicates the sensation of emptiness:

Autumn is enormous this time of winter. Single color in an arrangement
A kind of moss growing between. There was an occupation, and the
tide. This standing on two feet. Painting over your own history. Hands
search.” What is the value of invisibility if not invisible on the road?
indicate a displacement of wavelengths. White walls surround you.
o n c e a b o r d e r h e r e. This color which is not one. Which is not

monochromatic intensity. You are asked to place a pomegranate descendents. Dear hybrid, dear traveler, dear subservient of red: this pieces. You are waiting in the long line that is called the sentence. In you say will be stolen. Folded up neatly and carried across mitigated prefer, the comfort of inflections or innuendoes. The whistling that the exact location, you pierce the seasonal periphery. In the morning,

here, to expose the pericardial sac. Each pocket holds a seed and its morning is like any morning. The letter hasn't arrived yet: or only in the ubiquitous fragment, illegible gesture, smudged text. Everything borders: soggy and soaked with saliva. You do not know which to comes just before or marks each rim just after. Without describing when sleep is nearby, you want to understand the symptom of color.