

A piece of light-colored fabric with a herringbone pattern is laid flat. A needle and a length of red thread are placed on the fabric. The thread is looped and draped over the right side of the fabric. The fabric has some frayed edges and a small tear near the bottom left.

from COMPASS AND HEM

Jill Magi

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BODY

production room cinema room surgical
theater blue lit stage torture rooms
whipping post an obsessive display of agency
a crowd of tiny scars
(weapon an expressive sign)
an entire back or childhood
to kill for my country is to alter all tissue

ATLAS

my love is her body in pain body at limit
of my thought mother floating there
particularly exact and murky first touch
to know another body is to know the self
oh buffer my love worn we cave in to touch and mind
the between and joyfully this stirring the rocks of her
soil to describe

TARANTELLA

if she equals text authored by him then her
body text is what form -less to know
and to have than to see a turn turn turn
by throbbing not speaking Galatea lives her im-
print in softening wax finger to feign to make
this loose tangle giving ourselves back
to gravity an inward pull
in still pictures her capture shutters
subject best as still surface and surface

LABOR

to force from illness to be ill of a certain class
this violet upon the skin so couldn't

work to rest to rest oh restless

beat all the prop-

erty let this slave in return for sex-

ual labor bound in trenches

if pregnant then made to lie in specially dug depression

for to whip this archeology unbound and so

to protect whom? but not the mother

but not the mother his surveillance impatient with

slow so that blood and milk flew mingled I want

to separate

ATLAS

establishing quarantine a fence or felt-distance now
her time-boxes lifted down from her hand
diagrammed my life its colony of scars
stairs retract calcifying
my entrance into doubt into home into the city of
avenues running north and south counting counting
streets across the spine-point of her first memory
cross-hatched in pain and knots mother a map drawn

sch. 1900

SCAR

we scare edges into
hems of an open body we hover
conceive over dictionaries of lack
delicate arc of our speaking bodies
this volition as Olympic-body nation-body
not hemmed of an open body choice
on the precipice of re-
marks I read you and we

ATLAS

push-button that door not this waiting
front side basement or main lower floor spits
out your compass toward the goodness of strangers and
to afford a wheelchair or to be helped
her ramp Her in-
access my hand there my hip her thinning hair
look down and walk her face
her bones do not knit easily up-turned throat
a voice thin as a ramp her small my love
my bending temporary each surface
now turbulent

BODY

at last he returns at last to the capital city
from fifty years ago from which he fled asking
when did you flee? his wife visits
her polio as a child his war
in a wheelchair she is othered a purpose
to which he flees he pushes
her over medieval cobblestone streets wildly
spilling anxiety is their marriage
says at last my body our body our love to know

ATLAS

this pear shaped muscle to expand to conjoin
a center to carry for study for warmth and
growth stories in deep deposits running
northwards or such is the relentless pain willing
for the love of the child re-
sist forests
houses an organ calcify and lodge
tight and gathered history writes an organ
hinging upon fibre filaments amassed invasions
fixed to the smooth wall walled connective
the will bound re-
minded

SCAR

taking up fresh green country girls to hustle
all through the winter to take whatever paid she
placed in a brothel window washer floor scrubber
long stooped over hours worming the plants
I read the outrage reports found pervasive
fertility decline he writes
poorly dressed sickly and cross

MIRROR

why will you not bear are you so as to be
fruitless?

film captures wind away as hope

in the trees as a father goes to war

to feed what must we survive?

the shadow of historical action of the swoop swoop

of field grass and a film of endings childless and

only evidence of his quiet quiet

TARANTELLA

scene where he holds ankle or foot

slight

torture

torque

my body it is not

in this scene of his fatherline problem

pulls at fabric

sock

soaking

girl-

hood as blinder

singing

my home is over Jordan

pen the circumference of my body not

LABOR

your state of narratability into tension

demands narration as anxiety to touch to touch

wards

words

encamp

this postural

fault encamps round about

for each letter

a sex act until she spelled

my mother

is falling

and Beloved was her name

SPINE

marriage-body

said

I find you

where

hollow

This chapbook is an excerpt from a longer work:
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DUSIE

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