



Somewhere in-between / cloud

*for/ after Marthe Reed,
dearly missed,*

I like my poems to look me in the eye.
Ben Purkert, *For The Love Of Endings*

She had read nearly everything. Or imagined it
Marthe Reed

I could not think clearly, so I began to write.

I was trying to write an elegy. Contrails. What is our relationship to the human body? A land we stand upon and spoil. Tales of villainy, richness. Darkness. The earth provides.

Colonizers
name

and rename.

No longer of being,
but belonging.

How, then,
to write?

Truth lies
in the destruction.

Forest for the trees.

“Nomad,” she once wrote, “belonging accidentally.”

That which surrounds.

Through the razor-sharp.

The speed of cloth.

The length of a sentence.

A placeholder title. *I was trying to write an elegy.*

The path resists. How many times can you fail the speaker.

Still alive in Ottawa,
still alive in Poughkeepsie,
still alive in Great Barrington.

We drove out once to see her. Rolled up their incline: the campus, the
cemetery across. So many questions, covered in cow hide. An ending is
so rarely final.

Mary Oliver directed: Be astonished.

John Newlove: let the measure fall / where it may.

This is not the green grass. This is not horizon.

Peter Van Toorn: where you can smell the poem in a thing for miles.

Marthe Reed: how many times / more excruciating // the charm of /
revelation [.]

Say your piece, in the free form boxes.

Click to send.

Not enough to complain.

Not enough to poem.

I was trying to write an elegy.

Amid the shorn. Amid the “drastically collective.” Amid the forest for the trees. Amid the limitations of language codified. Amid the self-denial. Amid the sheltering of difference. Amid the multitude of beings, “clamoring for our scientific, political, and artistic attention.” Amid my burnt feet, paused before the same grass. Amid the guilt of poetry and the pleasures of the text. Amid the many countries, distant or near. Amid the memories of which for whom we still.

This is neither landscape nor portrait.

I don't know. Begin. I am I as we are *something something*. In this.

I am trying to write an elegy. She spoke volumes.

The introduction of property, and the unforgiving line.

Tears down
colloquialisms, as rough
shod as these leaves.

A collective
contrition.

Echolocate:
thoughts and prayers.

For every action:

Equal,
and opposite.

To write a line around an absence. Shape it. Ruins, ruined. Causal.
Perpetual slight-of-hand. Nature, as she writes. Industrial. Outside,
separate. Would they just join hands. A convulsion of class, and crisis.
This is all connected. Sing with me.

A love of inch-ness.
How would you know
the world ends. How would you love.
The body,
like the letter, rarely separate.

The disconnect, bleeds.
One upon another.
A mutilation that reads,
articulates. Rankles. Does this spark
joy? Speak, in a transparent fragment.

Pastoral
a modernist

design: the
disconnect

between human
and nature,

that diminishes
both,

and understands
neither.

The universe is expanding. Recycling bins. My lungs are full.

This god
-awful place.

The land
bears witness.

Frames, and conditions. A glossary of sabotage. One buries the lead.

A loose canon.

Regulating
the field.

A small
compartment.

I was trying to write an elegy. A kind of numbness. Neither condition nor
flaw. Water, through these handmade books. I cry out, walking. If one
could summarize a beginning.

As Plato says: we write things down in order to forget.

Distraction: we
knew this.

Disarticulate
trees.

“[N]ot as distance,” she wrote, “but as intimacy.”

Born in Ottawa, Canada's glorious capital city, **rob mcLennan** currently lives in Ottawa, where he is home full-time with the two wee girls he shares with Christine McNair. The author of more than thirty trade books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, he won the John Newlove Poetry Award in 2010, the Council for the Arts in Ottawa Mid-Career Award in 2014, and was longlisted for the CBC Poetry Prize in 2012 and 2017. In March, 2016, he was inducted into the VERSe Ottawa Hall of Honour. His most recent titles include the poetry collection *How the alphabet was made* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2018), *A halt, which is empty* (Mansfield Press, 2019) and *Household items* (Salmon Poetry, 2019). An editor and publisher, he runs above/ground press, *seventeen seconds: a journal of poetry and poetics* (ottawater.com/seventeenseconds), *Touch the Donkey* (touchthedonkey.blogspot.com) and the Ottawa poetry pdf annual *ottawater* (ottawater.com). He is "Interviews Editor" at *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, editor of *my (small press) writing day*, and an editor/managing editor of *many gendered mothers*. He spent the 2007-8 academic year in Edmonton as writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta, and regularly posts reviews, essays, interviews and other notices at robmcLennan.blogspot.com

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Note:

This poem, in places, utilizes the occasional word and phrase from the
late Marthe Reed (as well as a fragment quoted from Timothy Morton),
including from her co-editor afterward, “‘Somewhere Inbetween’ :
Speaking-Through Contiguity” from *Counter-Desecration: A Glossary for
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