

we frame the table
and we talk
of possible spaces
shared
spoken
or merely undisturbed
and as I stare
my eyes
fondling the flame
of rooms retained
sounds murmured
in the whispering of light
I see you take your cap
and leave
and hope
you will have heard
in my eyes
all that went
unsaid

that afternoon, the white canvas caught whatever
fell on it.

I sit, perched on the ledge, looking at the view
and wonder would I notice if it were to change.
the contours of the landscape similar yet never
quite the same.

I wait, a space held for a friend failing to arrive,
decide to go ahead and paint.

but after having filled several frames, I get bored,
avert my gaze, push the canvasses aside.
now only the empty one remains, its anticipation
locked into my gaze.

how much time passed, I couldn't say. continuing
to wait, I hum a melody but halfway through, the
final tone escapes;

I cannot land on it.
and so, I descend to landing somewhere else.

how to linger in the note on which you never can
arrive?

I sit, the white canvas waiting silently behind, as
the conversation we might have had escapes.

yet, an image anticipated is always waiting,
present, in my mind.

fumbling through the hour, I distract myself
holding a page.
it tells me that a landscape does not demand
from the spectator any understanding;
it demands, rather, his absence.

I wonder if I'm fooling, someone or myself.

continuing to linger on the ledge, the white
canvas sits and broods, and I cannot quite
remember if it is a friend I'm waiting for

or myself;
to dissolve slowly in the landscape and its
disregarding gaze.

she mumbles, next to me
in a language I have heard
yet cannot care to speak

stories urgent to be told
through eyes
hungry to be seen

the empty chair invites
the slightest look to fall
“if I knew your number, I would make sure to call”

a piece of paper held
between a finger and a thumb

fragments of a world
entangled in her mind
she writes down two words

the juniper

tree nor bush
an always inbetween
defying definition

tales untold
“for they are strange”

prefer, politely

the subtext of the smile
that signifies
no time no money nothing to waste

I came here for my space
not to be invited into yours

behind me, I hear
the sound of paper torn
the silence of a scorn

first language to describe
the blind spot
between her words and mine

hesitant to breach
I turn

she stands and she recites
“you give me something,
an exchange”

I hold her gaze
but hide my hands
and failing at her grasp

succumb to smiling
while around
the mothers seem deaf to any sound

to children it is easy to explain
dot pinpoints
an end to any sentence

in the vacuum
she shuffles and she leaves
the scrap of paper on my table

in which I find voiced
a concern for words
that lack translation

if we carry on to hold
only to our own
who will eat the fruit

the juniper might unfold

many people, of course, won't hear of it.

the bar has emptied, and as people slowly filter out into the night, we remain and talk. your words stream out and I jump onto their wave. lips quivering, eyelids trembling, the urge to speak heavy on my lips.

yet I restrain myself, for listening is hard when you have so much to say.

our words move, from the space of the performance to the act of refraining from play. my mind contains only fragments I remember being shown. we speculate, about ways of writing to signify a pause; about the place of silence in the span of a career.

I take a breath, lock my throat, a space of air enclosed; and imagine what it's like to lose yourself to some massive pause, giving over to the frame of sounds, thoughts, speech retained.

I imagine how a man sits at a piano yet doesn't touch a key, how the audience fidgets, coughs, sighs, shuffles, whispers;

as they sense uneasily the presence of what else could be, but isn't being, said.

how long can breath be held, before witnessing the emptiness enclosed, and all that silence tells?

the night draws on, you smoke, a man with a guitar roars and tells us, all of life's a stage. his beard catches the ashes, in his eyes a hungry madness is contained. I want to look away, yet you ask him, what he has to say. he laughs and sings, it's not so different, not being in a frame.

the scene changes to an empty room.

I imagine him at the piano, a half drunk cup of coffee holding down a stack of sheet music devoid of notes. he stares out of the window, into seemingly blank space. his hands rest on his knees; his pencil stays balanced between his fingers; poised always just above the page.

what then remained?
for a sound mind, nothing but to keep silent.

I have started to lose

I see it in your eyes
in how you tend to look away
skirt around the question
always avert your gaze

I am unraveling
something in myself
simmering collections
kept precious
where we do not want to delve

yet can I bear to look away
the hidden that's the heart
of what I'd really like to say

I wonder
why I leave
I wonder
what I'll lack
if I stay
in denial of myself
precious of the shelf

what is there to catch
in the glimpse of my own eyes

longing to linger

or lingering too long
in images both coveted and cold

what do I keep
there, so precious to my hold

what do I need
there, unable to be told

(in this world of sight
in order to be seen
I need to give up
the image of myself
succumb to the surprise
of being
through your eyes)

different words
in the absence of alternatives

all I want
is for hands to hold onto

and for me to tell you
I am ready
now, to lose

a cup of steaming black coffee sits between my hands.

we sit and I listen to the stories that he tells. his words seem to float up with the steam. the room is empty save for the play of light and breath. his voice echoes in the empty space, bouncing off the walls, dim shadows forming in the emptiness.

“until the invention of electric light most of the world most of the time was covered in darkness. no streetlight, no neon, no illuminated screens”

I nod, frowning slightly, and think of my notebook, the cat, my underwear. all the black I own. different densities, different outlines drawn. I blow gently on the coffee and watch its surface ripple. he continues.

“back then the world was bathed in black. darkness was something that people understood, because they were surrounded by it”

we gaze into the shadow that gathers beyond the crossbeam, around the coffee pot, beneath the shelves. unconsciously I tighten my grip around the cup, feeling the heat burn slowly into my fingertips. with my eyes I trace the patterns in the black, random stitches on an unknown surface.

“today, things are different. the darkness in the outside world has disappeared, but the darkness in our heart remains, unchanged”

he falls silent, lights a cigarette, a momentary glow of red. I shift, longing to move what seems to have descended around our shoulders. language seems to have become the shelter, in which we can withdraw. lacking words yet hesitant to fill the space, I take a gulp of coffee, too hot and strong, burning my tongue and leaving a bitter taste in my mouth.

and so, unable to voice my own darkness, I place down the cup, and sit with empty hands.

she sings, softly, for the last time.

I stare out of the window
at the pavement and the sky, which seem to share
the same shade of concrete grey.
the scaffolding, abandoned, beckons like an
empty frame.

why do I always seem to find myself surrounded
by construction?
sentences shuffled, yet I find myself stuck;
solidly embedded in an image of myself
and wonder how to lose my definitions
and enter into becoming
the constant shifting of the scaffolding outside.

instead, I watch it from afar.
instead, I dream of getting drunk at midday
and losing track of time.

instead. of what?

my mind stifled from staring into space
and seeing only projections
of longing and of loss

the wall;
the page;
the day;

empty space which I am unsure how to fill

instead, I falter
instead, I fall into the void

between here and there
now and when

longing to arrive
grasping at the gap

and in the gap, the urge arises to rewrite;
these words, myself, all that was said or that I
couldn't bare to say

before the prospect of the page
the mind hesitates;

and I continue to stare into empty space.
in the background, she sings, softly, for the last
time.

can you hear me? can you hear me?

