



Judith Roitman

Distinguished Kansas Poet

• [E-mail](#)

Judith Roitman lives in Lawrence KS. Her chapbooks include *Diamond Notebooks* from nominative press collective, and *Slippage* from Potes and Poets Press.

Journals in which she has published include *First Intensity*, *FOARM*, *Spectaculum*, and *Black Spring* (the Lawrence Issue).

DAY

his young hands

wrong-angled found wanting
transmuted through so that
balanced over edge

each foot slippage among stone inside

eyes tracing blue pagodas.

The knee in light.

Hair in light the light shirt sagging

the shadow whisper the thing unfixed.

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Baboon

The physiological trace of anxiety in its wordless form appearing as a baboon or a flock of baboons with lizard skin pressing out from the chest & stomach, these creatures inside him with whom he must become intimate before they will leave him alone. One by one dispersing and replaced, dispersing and replaced, always silent in the same crouched pose, poised for something, expressionless as only baboons can be expressionless, eyes glowing. If they would slip through his pores carrying their bags with them, as if realizing that the train isn't coming and it's time to go home, instead of always watching & the stillness to which his body begs forgiveness not comprehending what it is that it has done, so much must have been done. The deserving & the undeserving join together (as if they could be apart). Leaves thrown against glass & birds rising up against the luxury of boredom, against desire. His luxury is the slight cellular tremble that signals something wrong, tightening here & there, the signal not quite speaking its name so that constant vigilance is called for & perpetual rebuke. Whatever the name it is not called for, although surely it must be deserved. In order to preserve the semblance of order, the semblance of place & not of flight.

Originally published in *First Intensity*

The Baker Wetlands Situates Itself

The brain, emptied, fills with lard.
I went to bite his ankles but they turned into empty space.
Turned away in grief, birds look this way & that.
Hollow woodpecker sounds, like tourists.
Cows up against it, nose pressed to the herd.
In twilight gates shine, dogs rub like milk.
Love is no obstacle, she steps over him on her way to trees.
His arm is a hamlet, innumerable enemies.
Owl and dove congeal. You can milk anything for this.
Such soft grasses! When right speech is accomplished
There is nothing left to call for.

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First Cosmogony

Skin in resistance to air forming as defense defenseless & fear the swarm
of it as if night invading and the single breath escaped.

Within blood congealed thought forms like ghosts torqued into being
because curved, because lightning, because it just is like that, not like
anything else.

“She said that if you eat eggs you will be fat because eggs are round and
fat is round and this is how we go around, food migrating to the organ it
most resembles, string beans to fingers, potatoes to eyes.”

As a lizard waits in the sun so taste starting as light on tongue expanding
into more light & color spreading like cloth in winter.

So light penetrates everything as a magnet draws you in unpreventable,
your body winding around its axis in space, nothing to breathe or hold
on to.

Every medium belonging to light, every voice producing it, light singing
its own glory covering its own energy as a table covers a chair or a dog
its owner.

Alternating with sound wave upon wave these cannot be simultaneous it
is an illusion sound and light do not coexist there is always a choice to
make.

Voice comes from the earth, water from the moon, earth from sky, and
the liver is the seat of the emotions.

Everything trading places constantly so that the pancreas and logic meet,
all senses focus without form only psychic beings attempting to
perpetuate themselves is what we're left with, and unfinished rooms.

Sense itself knocked senseless as an eye with a red spot near the pupil, a
sign of trauma & difference & a life somehow gone wrong.

The origin is lost we have not found it but coolness, every year another
disease and the seduction of etymology to believe we can understand it.

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