

Clouds
that mean
something



- POEMS BY -
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poems by linnea ogden



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Acknowledgments

A version of “Something must have percolated” – *Aufgabe*

“Having you while I wait” and “Pruning one supposes” – *We Are*

So Happy to Know Something

“Powderhorn Park” – *Pleiades*

“I washed my feet” and a version of “Property” – *Gulf Coast*

“Consent” – *Lit*

“Katharine Nash Gallery” – *Konundrum Literary Review*

“Contact” – *The Boston Review*

“Excessive compensation” – *Cannibal*

“The possibly amazing future home of me and J” – *Coconut*

Something must have percolated

The city's view of us
before a party,
everyone lit up on Scotch
and wasabi. Night wrapped
in graffiti from
the hospital next door, inhabitants
no longer writing,
borrowed concrete diggers
at rest. Skipping rocks
across high tide, a beach that smells
of bloodmeal. What is
the best way of getting back.

Having you while I wait

I probably bought that porous explanation

Your green lobby painted halfway
In patches like the sun

I hear we have made some passage
Make the most of it

Make stitches
The streets an ancient delineation

Of romance
I would walk my bike for you

Dear J,

Nothing but fancy description here. My nights are bored and the words of who I read all run together. Do you remember that T-shirt with the tyrannosaurus rex you slept in. Do you need the medicines, the earrings, the debris.

Powderhorn Park

Small half-Siamese cat of the neighbors

Climbs out the window to cry on the front steps.

He is new here and can be forgiven the noise.

At our place unread novels hide under read ones.

A friend's son needs stitches. The girders

Of a half-built ramp make a cross

Against the sky. I would trade it in for certain.

Company

Driving through fog and other people's
homes, stalled cars, radio neither live
nor recorded, we have not
alleged takings, are not generous,

have no sense of being heard, enclosed
by our words, a window won't
roll down, we don't contend that our stuff
is anything but eye contact

refused again and again. That personality
will crystallize, that it all went wrong
in the process of meeting in the middle,
that communication did nothing

to bring us closer, with each other
or anyone else, that we are trapped in
clear resin is a given, like sculpture made
without feeling for the boundary between us.

Grease spot

There should be persimmons
Not hard nor jelly sold
By the family whose son died
Last fall
Apples with holes

Their seeds in star pattern show
A friend trusted to embrace
Catharsis
Though are we saying it all
If something external like
Partly cloudy

Descended on the sky
Like a dog looking up at her
Purebred master I
Hurt with small appropriate
Absence

Property

Tulips offer up
the shape of last week's blooms

my neighbor does a decent headstand
the state has been defrauded since

it doesn't feel better

and when a metaphysical entity
goes beyond windows and ourselves

the neighborhood refuses
to make sense of it

keeps going the wrong direction

right on being exempt.

I washed my feet,

got in my own way in the kitchen. There was a peach skirt that showed my underwear and I left it out of shame. The time was spent alone and walking, phone booths crackled, and when it rained I wanted to get wet. I went one place new each day and lost them all. The country's one stern market selling oranges by the bag.

Consent

Every spring
Trees cover themselves
In time for garage sales, have
Given them for totally other purposes
To create the compulsory association of
Front steps in the shade

In a minor act of refusal
Despite the wealth of records in the back
Of a VW van I buy
A grammar book, spend the money
Put these people in possession of something
I held for a little while

There's only so much to look at but
They can't tell what I think of the periwinkle
House, a little girl
Who doesn't want to walk
This authority compromises mine
You can know about most
Of your money contributed in a campaign
And be entirely separate from results

What kind of ritual is this
In which we go from stranger's house
To house, forced to belong and they have
Accepted us
Clothing hangs on fences, children may object
Affirmatively but other concerns
Will have to wait

They can't expect anything
Except my willingness to admit
Every action
Is complicit, right down to Sunday
And similar institutions

Sunday

Already lamenting helpfulness

May my heinous

Past experience enrich

My pedagogy

Stiff magnolias

In the company of strange men

Neon powwow

My dog allergic to wheat

Your dog allergic to dogs

Those who have died engage in

An odd contract

Held aloft while crying

For the comfort of a leash

Excellence is giving

them the slip. A stationary leaf becomes a stationary bird that flies off in the morning when you're not looking. What do you think about. Nothing. There's no way to know when someone might ask.

Traverse that portion

The manager of the land believed the land
was covered in plastic snow

The kind you see
only in a cinematic journey

Clouds that mean something

Limp T-shirt flopping on the bed
Obscurely what befell is
A disgrace to past lives and selves
To need product even on the weekend
Drink at 3 pm the paler the better
O to be a neighbor cat

Who inserts a curled paw through the screen
Not to replace anything broken
But to lay it on a street corner
My deli closed
Across the street the empty storefront
We approach the problem sideways

Yet completely master the angles
Do not speculate
On the benefits of polyamory
Specifically as we apply
To ourselves strictures like
The white cliffs of somewhere British

Once / lit

a candle in a church with gold mosaics. Once a woman's perfume smelled of something nearby. The mountains were big and more or less what I saw. The fruit all fit in the palm of my hand.

Holistic imagery device

Future Tuesdays glimmer
I call the parents of a dead friend

Hot tubs containing skin cells
Of ancient humans wink out

Over the hillside
You accept amalgam therefore

My mane grows at the same rate
As your favorite TV detective

Katharine Nash Gallery

The color of each car named in passing
Strapping & unstrapping the seats

Andy Goldsworthy could use the locust leaves
Pressed to the gutter. A poor parking job

Each event continues after my arrival

The mousetraps are a little cleaner each morning
When touched with a nail, they spring

To go to openings with children is to suffer
Get lost, freeway. We know the side streets

It can be so refreshing to take out the screens

Now I will go to clubs (I have never gone to clubs)
Now I will be young (I have never been young)

What's the difference between a mother and Bob Ross
The hands are shriveled, held near the cheeks

Maybe no one's given you any lanolin

Pruning one supposes

Gut makes a motion down
Plausibility the
Intention to remove shoes
That old serious feeling and then
Watercress

Might as well be in Paris
For all the French we're not speaking
Then some boundary falls
Toward me
And the work I can't do

Like the fact they put quail eggs
In my salad
My heart of palm
Some crescendo of thinking
Done concretely

Dry leaves discarded by the crew
The moment a crow pulls wings in
I lose it
And covet your unordinary
Countenance

On apple a maple

I call a friend who wants to be a friend.

Red leg cramp.

A wine bottle sealed and filled with tea—

This jealous substance made of jewelry.

Contact

. . . and the fact you know the rule
of opposites, rule of attraction is to sit
on the counter letting mice eat the peanut
shells. The rule is to keep quiet if possible,
tempered if not. The rule of the grass
as fake plastic in which seeds attempt to grow

allowed for a re-opening of the appeal, just
to let the points of contact form themselves.
A grackle sitting on a gravestone surveys
the cemetery. Several maples, one named,
all old and knotty. What living things do
is come together, whether violently or by

looking at the end date of an order, make sure
boundaries are sufficiently established,
failing that, productively breached. I hate
nothing except certain problems I have;
the integration of such behaviors would be
acceptable by most standards, yet if

the notice of appeal is filed by that date,
there may be reprieve, there may be proper
connection, there may be crystallized papaya
and contact out of solace, not misdirection.
I admit responsibility lies with the wooden spoon
mashing fruit into the vodka;

it would seem to me the party who
fantasizes is lost. Our rich interiority becomes

a flock of migrating birds in a tree
whose leaves are just beginning to show.
When discovered they move, make noise
or disappear and the fact that their position

is adversely affected may object on that
level where attention is negotiable. In a certain
sense I never left that kitchen, never left the
counter, all scenes co-exist since they
can't be reconciled. This is not news.
It explains being drawn to porches on that

basis, saying listen, you have no authority to do
anything without interrogating the atmosphere,
why the river smells like the ocean, why everything
becomes more possible and conflicted
in late spring. It's irresponsible to blame
the weather, irresponsible to say

this, what are you doing in connection with
something that during any other season,
any other month would be unthinkable?
Reconciliation is internal, twisted, and
like the tree, seldom labeled with
a name that illuminates it.

***I*graced **M**onday**

with my presence. Tuesday J. called me muffin or penguin.

Friday morning I came, I didn't come, I baked bread.

Other days I muttered small and selfish prayers.

They can do it some

Well I think we can communicate
Something about ourselves
You have a raincoat and the
Sun won't cast its shadow from
One side of the street

I take issue that it worked very well
If we knew this could happen we
Wouldn't answer the phone
To accomplish your means different
Tactics are identified
Requiring a maximum of physical
Interaction

Let's make it time-sensitive but
The truth is you decide
August was a little sub-par
And somehow friends on the other side
Argue there's another way
Of making choices I would choose

Excessive compensation

Are there specific vertical restraints
locust trees and something like cherry
that's definitely Japanese and attempts
to eliminate lead on the street where I live

Are signals optional and does laddering refer
to groups of men painting who never go home

Can we predict the near event or discern
what happens in other houses since
we know there were babies and may again be
babies but that's about it

Does anti-trust apply where we're working
against complacency which is not boredom
or love which is not settling in to the easy thing

We ask infrequently what takes place
at the intersection of our values
where art emerges from interrogating what
we'd rather not occur

We are focused exactly on these practices
as with a magnifying glass on a clear day

We want to save the ants

We want to save ourselves

Vanua Levu

Blue fish in small ponds, seed pods.

Dogs on the island are one dog.

If the palm trees are silver, turn

back. If they lean out from the shore,
if the reef herons, the wood surface,

the reticent crabs. Welcome.

The possibly amazing future home of me & J

The gnats protect my tattoo pigment.

I trust your peeling city studio.

The end of the fold-out bed falls off.

What's annual elsewhere is perennial here.

We traveled all summer to be here.

We are cultivating radish and yellow lupine.

The past in coffee grounds and eggshells

Moves inexorably towards the genuine self.

Linnea Ogden watches birds, makes great pizza, reads young adult novels, and teaches English at a high school in San Francisco. Her chapbook *Long Weekend, Short Leash* is still available from TapRoot Editions.

a H_NGM_N portable document format chapbook

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