

Winter 2013

Complete And Selected

Jerimee Bloemeke

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COMPLETE AND SELECTED

Waking up when I did not want to wake up.
Her alarm going off, she poured me
Cold water in a glass
And went to work in our living room. Falling asleep again I dreamed
About gangs, beatings, a church with nowhere to pray to be found, a woman
in a pantsuit
Asking me if I was looking for something
And saying no, thinking about calling her to warn her
About gangs since I did not want her to
Get beaten while running, leaving the city in a car I was not driving
Because I was running, cop cars staking out on the
Opposite side of the canal, finding hundreds of
Discarded diagnoses in manila envelopes.

27

A dig guarded by a marine, a paleontologist,
A plank breaking under my weight I held onto the
Edge of a brick wall until a plywood board
Came off in my hand, a marine telling
Me to let go, a floor an inch from
The bottoms of my feet, a utopia
Two overpasses across the street
Lead to, a city at a distance swarmed by
Copters, police showing up while
I watched it on TV with my family.
A redheaded child I did not recognize was hand-led
To an ocean beyond a beach beyond a deck
By a redheaded naked woman, a disappearing purple blouse, and a
Book of illustrated dirty jokes for children.

Waking up while she read a translation
We sat and talked and laughed about last night, watched TV on my laptop
And ate hummus and pita. I took trash downstairs on a sunny day
But was unable to determine what was so emotional

As I stood on the veranda smoking holding two
Letters I had received. Across the street
A white dog sat on a doormat breathing, went down the porch
Steps into the yard across the street, then underneath
The porch circa some hole or other it had dug, then
Came back out. It was tied up. The man across the street
Who we used to think was Andy but in fact
Is John came outside and asked me a question I answered. He said good for
me
Then took one step back and two or three to his left
So his eyes were shadowed by his roof edge
And I asked him a question he answered. Then John reentered his place.
I flicked my cigarette into the driveway. I thought three things...

28

Coming in, taking a shower, deciding to
And figuring there is nothing like something, making the bed
And remembering her birthday last week, watching over twenty hours
Of TV on my laptop, having hardly even enough money to
Eat, smoke, or get drunk, knowing I
Have not been working but some
Have as she turned to me to ask me how old she was
Or for a glass of water or a pillow
I say how happy I think I am.
I look up and a car drives by
I can hear outside, orange leaves looking like they are rustling
Over the apartment building in calming
Fall breezes out beyond our window.