The Guardian Angel of "Not Feeling"

Jorie Graham

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.
a brutish click, sound of black-water lobbying, and
then one girl, like a stairway appearing in the exhausted light,
remembers the reason with a fast sharp gasp, and
laughter rises, bending, from the chalice of five memories,
as they move past us towards the railing of the lot,
one stepping over, quick, one leaping high, giggling, red hair above her as she drops—two whispering, one hands in pockets looking down as she, most carefully, leans into the quick step over the silver rail—oh bright forgetting place—then skips to catch up with the rest, and the rail gleams, and the rail overflows with corrugated light.

**The Guardian Angel of Not Feeling**

As where a wind blows,
I can teach you that.
The form of despair we call “the world.”
A theft, yes, but gossipy, full of fear.
In which the “I” is seen as merely a specimen,
incomplete as such, overendowed,
maneuvering to rid itself of biological precipitates—hypotheses, humilities, propensities. . . .
Do you wish to come with me?
You know how in a landscape you see distances?
We can blur that. We can dissolve it altogether. You know the previous age?
How it lacks shape until it’s cut-away by love? We gust that lingering, moody, raw affection out, we peck and fret until it’s gone, the flimsy courage, the leaky luggage in which you carry round your drafty dreams—of form, of hinged awarenesses, all interlocking-up—dream on—the chain is rattling that you’ve cast, yet it is made of air, of less, look, here it mirrors, here it curves
in space, here it resembles—quick—for just a nanosecond—happiness—in incorruptible whole—how soothing, so real, a ledge above the waterfall—You know, in music, how you hear—you strain to hear—the isolation of the meager, the you alone, an interim bristling with arguments, illusions—they are lesions, they are spreading across a naked skin, a rolling, planetary stretch of human skin, not like the feeling of an unseen presence, not like—oh wave demolishing, we’re waiting for the phone to ring, we’re busy—no?—we cling—the versions of the desolation we clock-out in lists, in miles—The wave, the wave appears but then withdraws, it ruffles at its rim as whereabouts, moonlight thrashes in its curl, clatters as inventory in its curl, the wave—wake up—the wave I’ll give you tiny bits of if you’ll still—Postpone the honeycombing day, let the sandbar rise up beneath us here, the bed will do, the spattering of texture, shade—brocaded shirtsleeve on the chair—the corridor of mysteries you call your hair—the masonry of your delays—pen, paper, ink—my friend, look at the ink, dip fingers through its open neck, bring hand to lip—there—do it again, again, blazon the mouth, rub in, exaggerate—the little halo forms, around the teeth, the mirror on that wall shows you the thing, furious, votive—oh look, the tiny heart mouthing and mouthing its crisp inaudible black zeros out.