

Evelyn Reilly

Reverse Landscapes

*"I have no covenants but proximities."
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

1. everything I am is us

Giant prow
in ambiguous
weather. Love is

numerous. insects spores metal cloth

(Are we *in*
the moving or
beside?)

The interstices
in which the smallest
moments

Your famous solidity is at stake

*intermingling
particles*

The earthworm's cogito is wet, wet

2. *smallest changes*

What was at first inept

The *fin*, embarrassed

a notion of moving onto land

Not knowing how the random

might
sort

The lessons of kindness

accumulate often under the radar

of dramatic unhappiness

death melts us

into slightly altered information

Air-smell. the next is

happening

3. the remembrance of passion

People having traveled to places

inside the use (and abuse)

of photographs

Repetition never

is

Every word with hands all over it. Lips. A parting

of hair

one small bruise

Thus she tried to have a foothold in animal

4. *in parallel*

the road. A small worn mountain

Driving and the faulty meanings

fog and the dead

various sizes
spread out in equality

What slips

beneath
what language tries

to call *experience*

Corpuscles

all over

5. *lightclocks*

The antique light
on your skin today is

out of scale with the humming

Spheres

Slightest shift

and you collapse
into a gene pool

Glaciers that *calved*
now melt

Aged light worn from travel
brings a bath of the Romans. Her skin

in particular. Gorgeous
curdled milk

6. the lyric we

Who invited you anyway? Inside

a proposed world filled
with specific things

a situation

Occasions to look from the window

A silver plastic deflated balloon
stuck in a tree for years a partial
bicycle canned goods and a citizenry

(history corrupt
with forgetfulness)

And *you* my beloved
dirty with desire

and belief in the self
as an independent unit

The micro-organisms know better

Close the door
to persistent

metaphysical
phantasms

7. *walking*

Continuous small birds set an example. Open
appealing objects with edible kernels

not to be mistaken

for *depth*

The interior. An idea

of a place
to visit

digging around like some police
detective

the past supposedly

Your mind entangled and your blind eyes. I asked you
to take them off today

A day of pure walking

A bath of biology

8. across fields accompanied by birds

*Ascend. This lies
next to life is terrifying*

a field of sorts

Grass dust cumulo-nimbus

and ants holding crumbs

high

in a complex Aida-like
procession

(enemy body

parts left behind)

The ascension of the birds is their ascension

as slightest changes accumulate

into a *new*

Notes

section 1: Title is from Oppen's "Blood From the Stone".

section 3: Line 6 echoes a performance by David Antin in which he said "Every word we use has hands all over it."

section 8: Title and quote in line 2 are from Lyn Hejinian's *The Fatalist*.

'Reverse Landscapes' is an attempt to realize a kind of 'eco-poetics,' to write from a position that isn't entirely human-centered. At the same time I wanted to avoid the conventions of 'nature poetry' and to blur the line between the cultural and natural. The spirit of Ralph Waldo Emerson hovers throughout.

Evelyn Reilly lives in New York City and has just taught a course on visual poetics at the Poetry Project at St. Ma. She supports herself writing text for museum exhibits, and has published poetry in numerous journals including *AC Barrow Street*, *The New Yorker*, *Six*, and *3rd Bed*. Her first book of poetry, *Hiatus*, was published by Barrow Street Press in 2004. In the same year *Hiatus* was a runner-up for the Poetry Society of America's 'Norma Farber First Book Award'. Reilly's work appears in the anthology *Sad Little Breathings & Other Acts of Ventriloquism*. She has published critical essays on Nicole Brossard, Julie Carr, John Ashbery and others, and is currently working on a piece about Rosmarie Waldrop for *Parnassus: Poetry in Review*.