

From *Here in There*

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Iris gave her attention to the news. Iris gave her attention to relatives on the telephone. Iris gave her attention to writing letters. Iris gave her attention to protests. Iris gave her attention to the institution. Iris gave her letters to officials. Iris gave her time to relatives. Iris gave her letters to institutions. The storm was at last passing. Iris was late according to her relatives. The meal was nearly over. The car was damaged. Her experience was documented in a letter that described the future passing over her, beyond reach. Yet there was no ceiling within sight. Interest was floating over her. It was another name for time. The herd is numberless. Since to whisper is grammar. It is a description of time. It underwrote everything. It was simple and declarative. It was red and digital. It was to become the emptying of contingency. It was an escape. Iris gave herself to laughter. Iris gave herself to rejecting Catholicism while fantasizing over convent life. Iris characterized the nation's sudden and unified decision to vote differently as a residual Catholic tendency. The unrecognized nation within a larger and recognized nation had voted for an unknown, socialist, federal party. The unrecognized nation voted cynically and in unison and formed the official opposition within the recognized nation.

I gave my attention to the pause. I gave my attention to the frozen Skype image. I gave my attention to waiting. We were on hold. We could see but not touch and yet to touch was composing us. We were broken only where skin could not answer. Iris' skin is ornamented with tattooed threads, mingling with each other in scrolls and coils, and alternating with straight lines. Repetition is truly raw and visible, fibres and sinews, strips and straps. The sense of beauty merges with and is consumed by the sense of reminiscence. Iris shuts down her computer. Iris stands up. Iris stretches her neck, shoulders, back. Iris shakes the cramps from her elbows, wrists. Iris releases, recollects. I was directed away from the Everywhere Beautiful. I turned off my computer. I stood up, I stretched. I entered the kitchen. I gave my attention to the refrigerator. I sought its answers. I sought the composition of preservation in a cramped space of provisions. I sought the composition of attention. I gave my attention to an avocado. I gave my attention to a knife. I gave my attention to olive oil, salt, lemon. I cut slowly and meticulously. A soft human hand with its tools. I enhanced the detail. Often I could recall nothing but our shared question. It was repetitive. It became our ornament. Its recurring figure was our uncertain future.

Iris gave her attention to the slow sun of the afternoon. Iris gave her attention to the vicious conflict. Iris gave her attention to the rule of one. Iris gave her attention to the silence of deliberations. Iris gave her attention to the signature on the paper. Iris gave her attention to the pen. Iris gave her attention to the yellow of the legal document. Iris gave herself a moment in which she could reflect. Iris found calm in this evaluation. Iris found silence in this calmness. Iris gave her attention to the shadow on the x-ray. Iris gave her attention to the calendar on the physician's wall. Iris gave her attention to the calm of the signature. Iris gave her attention to the disinfected surface of a counter. Iris signed a cheque. Iris gave her attention to a stethoscope. Iris gave her attention to a white sheet of paper pulled over the examining table. Iris gave her attention to green lawn. Iris gave her attention to the herbicide regularity of grass. Iris gave her attention to the brightness of the afternoon. Iris gave her attention to the invisible toxicity of a suburb. Iris gave her attention to the visible toxicity of the city. Iris folded the pollution of desire with care. Iris gave her attention to the fold. Iris folded the attention of brightness, of the x-ray. Iris folded the attention of visibility.

Iris walked away from the interrogation desk. Iris reboarded the bus. Iris gave her attention to the regularity of upholstery on chairs and ceiling. Iris gave her attention to the dominance of upholstery. Iris gave her attention to the relative invisibility of patterns. Iris gave her attention to the detail of a voice and a signature. Iris gave her attention to the visibility of the irregular. We shifted our bags and shrugged off our coats. We attended to our travel documents carefully. We were re-emerging as individuals from persons with spatial origins. I gave my attention to the purse at my foot and to my leg stretched awkwardly into the aisle. I gave my attention to the volume of chatter, to untangling languages. I gave my attention to the coat folded under my head and to the pinched circulation in my leg. I gave my attention to the smell of nail polish, of varnish. I gave my attention to the toxicity of full, inelastic and completely rigid forms. I heard the elevation of activity to durability. I heard canons forming from important consequences. I heard great upper structures supported by terraces. I heard intermediary figures moored at the bottom of thought, retaining meaning reductively and symbolically. I heard supporting parts of words, shadows and letters. I followed their indications. I heard an almost exclusively mechanical technique and a less frequent offering of poetry. I heard elements of *bottom*, *least*, *superficial*, of *profundity*, *terra* and *truth*. I heard truth in the word varnish. I heard the greater detail of the place name tear the fabric of language. I saw us through the gap created by the place name. I chose to tear through the textile with the nail of that name.

We heard truth in the word, tearing. Banknotes, flags and passports could be torn but the hard material of coins, screens and credit cards could not. We followed glass, a material that cannot be torn, to its beginning with geometry. We secured rectangular windows versus the complexity of leaves, which can be torn. We heard the end of the poetic line as it turns relentlessly, whether cutting, breaking or tearing. We read *The Ear of the Other*. In any case the proper name is the only thing that does not change in translation, said Jacques Derrida. Even numbers may change. We read an essay by Norma Cole about Samuel Beckett who turns the ten nights of *Le Bateau Ivre* into nine in translation. We heard green tear in the word, ephemeral. Vertebrae of spring cast their shadows on the place name. We can follow this spine where the flesh of the greater body is ephemeral. We can follow the ephemeral and describe it from a point of view created by the place name. There is no more pattern in any torn fabrication. We can follow the hoax, be taken in, swindled. To be green, to be gullible, to be young. I heard the subway passing beneath the building six stories down. I heard the insistence of near and distant memories. Interest shuttled past rapidly. I gave my attention to credit. I inscribed my signature on the screen with my bare finger. I credited my senses with the accumulation of fluctuating reflections. Released cellularly, memory is sensuous, more exaggerated and rawer. I gave my attention to participating as a spectator. Credit erected a temporary structure over memory.

Poet and translator **Angela Carr** is the author of two poetry collections, most recently *The Rose Concordance* (BookThug), and several chapbooks, including *Risk Accretions* (Beautiful Outlaw Press). Her translation of Québécoise poet Chantal Neveu's fourth book of poetry, *Coit*, appeared from BookThug in fall 2012. She has published and performed her work internationally. A doctoral student in Comparative Literary and Media Studies at the Université de Montreal, Carr currently divides her time between Montreal and New York City.