

from *Wheel of Fortune*

where you've placed your hands fold my body
along a median : the center of the sagittal plane pull heaven closer to heaven
turn the door inside out so the field opens infinite

with a small keyhole of dark I lose apostrophe
addressing you presence through absence : ribbon + knot
I'm asymmetrical press your face to mine open a door that isn't a door

we stand shoulder to shoulder peering through windows
origin : destination time : distance cosmos : eye
particle : wave I fall out to fall in again

I do not want you : I only want you *inside /and out //impossible /locations*

if I turn you and there's nothing left fall through : fall through

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everything is intended for distribution memory is a short-term reality
did such-and-such happen I tell you to remind me so I'll believe
what I've experienced I tell you what I tell no one else I tell you secrets

I watch the clouds bend space the windows are open fire flows through
gallery after gallery empires, coins, charms, talismans
tender is the leather or dreams for the future

cut salt the desiccated labor earth speaking to us : do you abuse me
I take heart I accept the heart with gratitude
we press our hands together we encounter a timeless form

pepper spray or fear crushed eggshells : powdered sleep some tunnel
dug by hand ecstatic land river ghost yarn archive
how shoulders (disposition) how shoulders (angle bearing)

the possibility of this slow dance is nested inside
do you remember that Mazzy Star record so dirty + drowsy
there's a mesa on the horizon I can't keep sight of

the raw + vulnerable infrastructure performs softer, more tender
modes of masculinity lightbulbs, cages, chains, and hardware
we've passed through the underworld perhaps we're still there

sound installation earth + fire circle the daymoon astronaut flower

because it's dark because two screens have been placed on a hinge

I cry in the art gallery bending inward altering speeds

do you feel like you have to hide yourself do you feel like you have to be someone else

I say your name to a stranger she cleanses her hands in oil she breathes in

she says you'll carry your own knots and I see the knots before me in the placement of the wands

interlaced fingers white roses trellised

you won't open your hands I tell you this

but I can't relay how I'm held captive

I'm unsure how much time has passed I open the door

it's a paper heart how I open for you

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so specific, the dust how does one make the void felt

I clasp my hands behind my back because it opens my heart

a woman strips nude and wades into the river as I cross the bridge

plank by plank I don't look at her don't call it mercy

hold flowers against your body describe the hands of someone you love

lace plaster + rebar the cupped palms of my breasts

and reinforced and given up in diffuse panes + infinite knots

if a cycle is an occurrence or a series of occurrences wherein events or phenomena repeat themselves

in the same order or at the same intervals then cycles exist in many forms

tree rings mycelia the room you invite me into
cloth on the wind pulled into cloud or time is relentless
turn as you're taught open your eyes and look down

your organs are showing crack the wishbone
threaded rods + patches of mortar the compression of individual agency
and the myriad ways we're surveilled how we learn our bodies don't belong to us

as teenagers my cousins traded sex for cigarettes GPCs—shitsticks, not even Marbs
extended laughter, foil chewing gum wrappers, hairspray-encrusted curling irons
illustration of an exposed nerve + several skulls how to unknit a garment

while you're still wearing it what defines water

the vessel splits open blood accumulates

the tumors begin to flower, to scope outward irradiate

his raw throat his flayed skin

his swollen tongue the insects + the highway's wracked hum

please don't speak I'm begging you not to speak

let's wash our hands my love is a debt

my love is an expenditure I give + give

and the crossroads and the milkweed pods split bitter

there are ways to measure time clouds of plastic

and burning forests and pliers for pulling teeth

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the way you eat fabric eat beauty is it the same bending inward is it

the same willow as my own let me become fog sutured hollow

while you drape me like bone bordering violet germination

braided/bedded down to begin to search for undivided light

to weep at the sight dreaming blood budding + greening reading lungs

open your heart have mercy on me

I'm trying not to tell you already the shape of how you're pouring

you're not here so why am I speaking as if you are

I'm trying to wait while I feel a gathering also inside the reservoir

of your chest the way lungs fill
is it fractal is it pleura is it plural
turn to drawn trees draw close to me we're at the threshold

preparation : entering moving in : being in the center moving out : taking leave
walk outside now shut the door and be there inside the world
I sit beside you before you know before you disclose that you feel perhaps we've met before

your shirt looks soft to the touch I'll hold it here at the hem the room is dim and warm I've arrived late
but only slightly my brother my friend wait for me save a place for me outside the wind blows
snow across the street the snow is a fine powder shimmering what time is it time slips into place it's

night the hours unfold as hours are meant my brother names humors names bile you walk a line
your friend pulls a silver harmonica from a case of silver harmonicas he holds it in his palm and
draws it upward to his mouth time slips into place we move tables so my friend can hear we move

tables and I am cold I sit beside her she shows me silver earrings, matchless from Iceland
\$175 a piece I tell her to buy them for herself risk is a moment we rest on the precipice of risk is a
moment upon whose precipice we rest it's held breath it's gazing across a room knowing you'll place

one foot before another knowing where you'll arrive it's gazing across a wire we risk disclosure soft
to the touch a fine powder it shimmers this is a process of receptivity the labyrinth can make one's life
transparent slowly slowly says the dream I want to walk inside it so open

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Danika Stegeman's second book, *Ablation*, was released by 11:11 Press on November 1st, 2023. Her first book, *Pilot* (2020), was published by Spork Press. She's a 2023 recipient of a grant from the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund. She's an assistant editor for Conduit and does light bookkeeping for Fonograf Editions. Along with Jace Brittain, she co-curates the virtual collaborative reading series It's Copperhead Season. Her website is danikastegeman.com.