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Penumbra is the official, refereed, scholarly journal of Union Institute & University's Ph.D. Program in Interdisciplinary Studies. The journal is published at regular intervals and dedicated to challenging traditional academic and creative disciplinary boundaries in the context of social change.

Penumbra's purpose is to promote theoretically informed engagements with concrete issues and problems. The journal publishes socially engaged, innovative, creative and critical scholarship with a focus on ethical and political issues in the humanities, public policy, and leadership. *Penumbra* is a peer-edited and peer-reviewed journal committed to spanning the divide between scholarly and creative production, and to fostering work from graduate students, junior scholars and emerging artists, in addition to more established critical and creative voices.

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The Evidence of Things Not Seen

I was.

There you were and I was looking at a newspaper with my body in the body of your imagination. The hope of your return kept my blood running through windy plains. I paced up and down a nervous room of frail voices. What if you do not arrive! I assert that you are a cloud that collides with the red mountain. My death is your presence. I wait for the singular moment that will throw me out of gear. In body passing out of its senses I catch the fever of life. All that I lived, the love I felt in the eye, the pursuits of the soul – they happened in a moment when I was away to meet a friend without a name. I rose and fell as happens to waves under the spell of the moon. I rolled in the sand of phantasms. I leaned across railings of a bridge feeling the sensation of going into sunlit waters far below the edges of perception. I do not fall because I reconcile with you. The differences of a lifetime came to view. I could not go down without expressing ineptitude when it came to words. I held you the way a soldier needs to feel the hilt of a sword. I brandished the sword in the wind but the cold would not die. I fought you in the desire that ran through my skin. Your quietness had a deadly effect on me. You had a way of keeping rage within the shape of silences. My worlds that were a collection of images collapsed faster than day in the lap of night. All my losses put together came to one moment. I gave up the one moment to be freed of mortality. I gave up nothing. I was looking for the sound of happiness.

I moved into the heart of forms. I came out of a mirror glued to time. My suffering is illogical or it would never be mine. I squeezed the flesh out of music. I was sad as a

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person who misses a lottery by a single digit. The cursing of fate became a pastime for the heart's tongue. I kept pummeling invisible walls with bare hands. My hands turned into a semblance of skeletal images covered with flesh. It seemed unreal until I saw blood flow into the hollowness that became the life of my hands. The child I abandoned to the universe became a singer. The child that was mine suffered. I took the suffering child in my arms. I cried through my prayers. I asked for help. I screamed in the direction of the stars. No one heard me. The world was a lonely place. I asked the abandoned child to pray for her sisters. I regret the illusions that kept my youth occupied.

I was desperate to be normal. I wanted normal joys. I write my end as if I were on stage declaring my innocence to an audience that has already left. I called upon emptiness to vindicate the life I wrought in a moment. The hard part was giving up sadness that smiled through lips as if that is where it was born. Sadness slipped from the face and the dreamless sleeper came out of my death. In my illusion I escaped the clutches of death. In freedom I looked for death to release the face of the moment. The moment would not outlive me. Neither would I be able to come out of absence. The slender paradox of time and infinity was the dominating paradigm of my life. I let infinity replace time because I knew what it meant to be a person in the bliss of love. I took the illusions of living seriously. I go through the loneliness of infinity before I get past time.

Neighborhood.

We live among other selves. The person I feel for the most is my neighbor. I knew she was not one person. The friend together with the enemy became one body. When I say you must believe in yourself it means you are certain of the monsoons to come. In certainty of water running down the face we were young in the afternoon of our first days. The air absorbed our dreams. We walked down the road facing the sea. Backgrounds floated through our bodies. It did not matter where we stood. We could be anywhere in the cosmos locked in one thought that brought me into you. I felt the oneness of a life given to fire in water. I dream of living in the times of your body. Our friendship locks us in an unforgettable tune. One cloud and the wetness of dark feelings. We came out of time and passed out on a bed of straw. Tired we barely noticed the sun warming the room. Out of isolated happiness came the need of a friend. I encase my ecstasy in stories of the miraculous arrival of the guest whose lips I tasted in a dream. I wasn't dreaming. It could be an act of consciousness. I was attributing the quality of dreaminess to the lips of the guest. Love infects the air in the neighborhood. Stories upon stories and lips drunk with the sweetness of the guest who arrived at dawn. In clouds gently breaking apart to let in the light I took the guest into the formless body of the dark escaping into the belly of the sky. Were we ever separate at any point in time? I've little to offer as an individual. I owe the power of dreams to dissect reality to a parachute falling through the heavens. Nothing is faster than light and neither is the parachute. I speculated on the possibility of

moving beyond time. In a parallel lightless universe I had the tenacity of the blind. The neighbor is a body with my eyes. Through her is my knowledge of the sources of water in a traveler's deserts.

True to thyme.

Beauty is the background to cruelty. I reject the cruelty of the beautiful. What happens to man when power enters his bones? The man who seeks to preserve the beautiful is the cruelest of men. He preserves it in the violence of body against body. I prefer being true to thyme rather than beauty. In beauty I'm a man. In thyme I'm a possibility. Beauty is the dogma of truth. In thyme compassion is truth. Why do I need beauty if I can live without malice! The smell of thyme is all there is to meaning. The wars of the beautiful stain the earth with petals drenched in the blood of men. I give up the beautiful for the hills and the lakes. I drop down on the banks of the river and beg forgiveness from death that nature has spared me of. Cruelty I've given the earth that reciprocates with the calm of the mist. I've a long way to go before night catches up with memories of my beating heart. I pass towns where my open eyes barely see anything beside the long spell of the dark. My body is awake. I feel the soft breath of a child in my arms. I feel alive in thyme. I must've been dead for a long time. My passion for beauty died in the dream that over-shadowed sleep.

I came to terms with images to which I brought pain. The reconciliation was a revulsion I felt for the manhood I stood upon in the glare of morning light. Such was the beauty of the morning that my feet stuck to the ground. Injured in the foot I was seized with fear. I did not want to die no matter what. Habit brought the beautiful together with the cruel. I was lost to thyme. I was vindictive for the same reason that I brushed my teeth and took a shower. It was a sign of cleanliness. I cannot bear a polluted body. The body had to be rid of the pollutant. I took the moral burden of making a clean world. I was destined to torment the ugly until nothing of it was left on earth. I keep the beautiful the within bounds of the self. In murder I found the answer to the question of the beautiful. I lost nights to uncertainty. I regain them in the murders of the beautiful. I burnt and plundered villages and towns until the truth of thyme occurred in passing. I saw my reflection in the greater cruelty of another man. I saw who I am in the twinkling of eyes that spoke little even as they acted out the worst forms of sadism. The smile hurt me because it resembled mine and could've been me. The music of evil roused in me one last cry of loss. It is neither the beautiful I seek nor the cruel. I call upon the kindness of water to forgive men the unforgivable need to possess the scent of thyme.

Hide-and-seek.

I made it look like I was born to hide. Hiding is language as seeking is nature. I hide in what I say. I seek what I never find – the person that I'm not. The conviction of your

existence is in doubt. I feel you with the senses. I know the breath of your mouth coming out of my tongue. The need to believe is hunger and thirst with equal force pulling the body apart. In the need looking for succor I reject you though you are all that I seek. Your suffering deludes me into closing my eyes. I'm far from letting you tear the blinds covering my sense of self. I reconcile the personae of my body with the logic of superstition. I find that more acceptable than you being the person that I am. I cannot bear to believe that you are me. I cannot be normal. I fear the loss of sanity. I fear suffering in your place. My body is used to delusions of itself as a dreamer of elephants. The poor thing does not know better. I dare not disappoint the body by bringing you into my life. I seek you as death seeks life. I'm not willing to die so that you live.

Beneath.

I was standing beneath a streetlight watching rain fall with the smallness of rice. I'm willing to live in the pessimism of a body with no truth. I hide from you. I hide from love that escapes the prison of a word. I hide from all that is less than obvious. I know the world I'm intoxicated with. I am the dolphin in both air and water. I command fantasies to become stages for audiences to gaze at my childishness. What flows beneath the knowledge I acquired through replication of patterns of roses is an undercurrent of silence upon silence. I shirk away from what does not turn into sound. I was born with a cry and there was no need for silence. I was silent in the few moments when I did not hear my breathing. I jumped with fear in the bones. I cannot bear not being real and yet in wild undercurrents I could not recognize anything that closely resembled me. Silence was another world from a dark period. I'm used to accumulating feelings that burst into words when I no longer contain them.

Triumphalism.

Trite is the sun of yesteryears. Memory is the invention of culture. It is musical for someone like me who takes pleasure in tunes dancing in the head. The little devils that are sounds make the day go faster. I'm simplistic when it takes so much to be simple. I turn on my feet spinning through untimely orbits. I'm zigzagged for short of reasons to go in a straight line. I'm true to voices that are not mine. Alone I'm sinister. In company I'm as sinister as you are. Stranger to strangers I'm stranger to the one in the mirror that cannot hold itself from breaking down each time I look at it. I walk with a raised head to watch birds. I fall into ditches dug for nobody. I'm suspicious of my deviousness. I'm amazed by the ease with which I walk into stories of betrayals. My life is one long moment of complicity in a series of murders I did not commit. I do the most unforgivable act with innocence that makes you cry. The child in me cultivated a taste for triumphalism. I cannot help being the sweetness of all I see. For a hurt I eliminate villages born out of centuries of imagination. I cannot bear the isolation of beauty. I preferred the ugliness

of cities where I disappear into a lane with barely livable houses. I walk into the house with a cinema poster in it. The union of opposites happens behind closed doors. The boy who took me to the house straight from the bus stop pulled a cigarette out of my pocket. I wanted instant gratification in the body of the prostitute. The demands never come to an end. The prostitute knew what it took to be one. She referred to herself as the 'family type.' I smiled at the appropriateness of the term. The family created the prostitute. I never knew how wooden a body could be until I felt the one on the floor. I took her with vehemence of the dying. The rules were laid out and she was in no mood to compromise. A job had to be done as far as she was concerned. I finished my part and went out waiting for the friend in the other room. An old woman was threshing rice. I watched listlessly.

Compos mentis.

A good part of life goes with you out of your mind. Rarely do you go by the plan made in the clarity of twilight. You're posing for a photograph. The senses are deviants by nature. The critical thing in my body is a line of sensuality coming on the page with irony and transcendence. You never write for a person. You write for an abstraction into which a person is made to fit as one puts a photograph in an empty frame. Artists are makers of frames. I saw myself in lines of writers who never dreamt of my existence. No one is fully *compos mentis*. I weathered situations that left me crawling for my humanity. No one has seen a calm river and fail to repent for the excesses of life. The detachment of water is the mind absorbed in the dark. In waters far from thoughts we spilt blood that did not belong to our clan. We extended brutality to women that failed to keep the integrity of body and soul. Manhood is a process combining history and environment. No one is born a man.

Inflections.

In wine I felt the voice beckon me to dusk. The voice changed as night progressed in the intensity of subtle variations. I was counting the frequencies in a love maker's voice. At the point I felt silence I knew the answer to the night. It was a brightly lit room with a carpet in the middle. I promised myself never to experience the infinite without wine in the background to bring me back to the real world. I was afraid to transcend without the strength of wine. The wine in the voice took my heart. I rejected irony as I approached the body without limits. Through the voice I figured out the length of the night. Wine, myself and the night of the voice – three factors and the number of rooms kept increasing proportionately to accommodate the music from the window. I was bewilderingly close to the forgetting that kicks the bucket of time back into the dark well of the cosmos. Go any way you like but you come to the point that is outside the town. The outsider is an artist when it comes to memorizing ways. You never forget the ways of the body that become one with yours in the wine of forgetting. You return to the body as one remains

an outsider for no reason. I knew I was talking to the dust in a voice without inflections and light from the hills staring at me as I contemplated beauty that passion resurrected in the corpse of time.

Sketchy.

I collected rare instances of silence to make a sketch of a perfect life. I left it incomplete because I had dreams to dab the sketch. I was wistful during late afternoons and sensual as the night fell into my ears with the cricket in the background. The dance was the stroke of many feet in rhythm. At midnight there was nothing left but wait for the dawn. I asked for color to make the eye lively. I strove for memories of hands moving upon the skin of a lying body. In the marshes light takes the color of strangers looking for a time outside time. We were young and rivers ran inconclusively. The faith in creation was a moment. Something had to be created for such faith to be possible. The recreation was a face in a white moment of sunlight. The spirit of art came into hands that suffered. I held the raging heat of the times to my bosom. How could the mother let go the child in the surging tide to come! I preserved what I could of moments of madness in the soul. The waters took me past the rock. Consciousness had no meaning to me other than the spirit. The light I perceived was the abyss that rose from the cave of the spirit to worlds at hand. The spirit embraced bleak thorns with love of music from a sensitive hand. The knowledge of spirit is greater than the attempt at recreation. The joy of recreation is in imitation of the face envisioned in fire as it breaks out at the center of a forest in a valley. Light rose from the ashes to the stars. A prison without windows is a tomb. I'm entombed in the sweetness of spirit. I rejoice in stars shining through the ashes of the senses. In bodies across time I make homes. My aloneness is spirit that cannot be identified. In death I'm connected to life. The sketchy portraits I make are spirit in waiting for the gloom of shadows to pass away. It would not matter if I never existed to sing the song of infinite praise. My life is a frail occasion in a sea of occurrences. The sea and my life serve the blankness of imagination before death becomes sleep.

Time capsule.

I don't have a language of my own. I keep telling myself that such a language does not exist. Death has taken the irony out of words. Pain simplifies the truth. The mad person wants to go further than time. Madness was my life on roads where people are tokens of laughing faces. I'm touched by the seriousness of made-up rooms. I could die or kill for them. My self is invested in walls I bequeath children. My dreams are edgeless spaces. The negotiation I imagined taking place in the blood is false. Civilization is another name given to failures of the spirit. Contaminated legacies are unnatural. My humanity is my will to renunciation. I negate the illusion that comes in the way of the spirit. I create for the joy that connects my body to the dead and the unborn. I associate the security of

comfort with the distance it creates between past and future with me lost in an isolated present. I don't reject technology. I reject inequality. I don't reject the senses. I reject sensuality. I don't reject the body. I reject whatever forgets the spirit. I don't reject happiness. I reject the happiness that comes without sharing. I don't reject pain. I reject that which drugs pain to sleep in the guise of ideology. I reject desire but not passion. I reject attachment but not love. I reject institutions but not people. I could never reject individual persons. I embrace the communes of strangers even if they are made of two persons who believe that a single act of sacrifice is meaningful to the universe. Interestingly I'm the novelist who likes to parade her likes and dislikes. Either I reduce the scope of the novel or poke fun at the simplicity of the genre. I did both, which is what Solomon the wise or the Buddha would've done.

Decanter.

The instant I forget wine I've given up thinking of decanters. Liberation is a comic instant of merriment. You catch me dancing without a glass in hand. What flows in my body is wine not blood. I respect intoxication. I cannot be a poet but for that. I make a stone sing but I cannot think in an orderly fashion. I blame the drunkenness of the body for that. I die in an odd corner of the night. I wouldn't know what took me away while I was praising you with lips of the spirit. You're my drunkenness and without you I'm a useless decanter meant to be recycled in a factory.

The Door and the Staircase.

I was elusive when it came to descriptions. I narrowed the degree of visualization to monkish levels. I was an ascetic in the sparseness with which I took objects seriously. It is never easy to be voluble about what you face each day – brutalized landscapes that are masculine in bitterness. My description is facile. It is easier to betray than be factitious. Betrayal is performance that goes against self-preservation. There is no heroism in being untruthful to an audience of liars. I got the idea of a door and a staircase from a movie. The misreading of the colonized is unwittingly profound. The door I enter does not lead to the staircase. The staircase is nowhere near the door. In the imagination I see both of them standing parallel to each other. I feel as though I must go through one magically only to realistically come out of the other. That is how I see words. Each sentence is parallel to the other one. A sentence is either a door or a staircase. The disconnection is maintained. I make a frame of disconnections. I keep alive the paradox that makes me an alternate writer. I see the thing so obvious that it blurs the eyes like the poverty of the poor or the domination of men. Passion makes me say things in spurts. I cannot imagine doing things any other way without being pretentious.

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Prime Mover.

Everything boils down to the eyes. Cool water on a summer afternoon and the eyes bursting with life. My fainting fits begin with the eyes. I'm exhausted because I haven't eaten all day. Bread and salt dilemmas are real as far as the eyes are concerned. Who knows the hunger of the heart better than the creature sleeping beyond my eyes! At some point I ignored my eyes. I refused to look in any direction except inward and then I wasn't looking at all. I moved the world that I saw in the blindness I was born with. I often thought about the real world – if it really existed at all. How different was that world from the one I saw with the eyes used to making stories. Was childhood real? Were pain and anger real? Was the 'I' who imagined death in the bones real? My hatred of God – was it real? Were the eyes of friends that hurt my sensitive skin real? Was the music or the love real? The millions of times I felt mocked and forgotten for no reason – were they real? They are real in the compassion I feel toward strangers. I'm no stranger to myself. I inhabited this body all my life. If death is a process of quitting I make peace with the stranger I feared without reason. I gave my blessings to the eyes that barely uttered a word. I saw beauty in the ugliness of life at the bottom where men and women managed to keep their humanity from drowning in a bile-green sea. From a scholar on the gaze I became a poet of the eyes. The inhumanity of others is the possibility of what I'm capable of doing given the situation of the other person. This does not justify inhumanity. It is one reason why I must love you unconditionally or not love at all. I'm moved by all that I do not see with the faith that I'm at the center of the troubled heart of the world. Eyes in the dark float upon silence.

Captivity.

Admonish me as much as you like and I stick to surfaces. The insecurity is obvious. I say things and leave them incomplete like a broken track in the middle of a forest. I think it is strategic. You laugh at my impunity. Time is not a factor. I don't condemn the pleasure of dreaming. I invested my being in dreams. The love I believed in came from streets that did not make a fetish of the past as I do. The oppressed squeezed through life as through prison gates. I'm struck by the dream that makes them human in their quirkiness. In the demeaning dirt of the world there is a timeless moment for one who shares the plight of those pushed into drudgery. I broke the power of drudgery with love I felt for the poor whose work gave reality a basis in truth. There's a point beyond which a person embraces death rather than accept to live without reasons. That is an intensely human moment for any person. You're encountering death that is musical as life itself. Bred in captivity the bird chose to fly into the dark. I drew the contours of my kingdom from the moon to the horizon. I was centered in the moon. I changed with progression of cycles. In the horizon I saw the circumference of dreams. I grew old looking at faces as I traveled while being looked at in the curious way that we identify with strangers.

Years.

Rain spread into the makeup giving a distorted look to the face. I don't sleep easily for lack of music in the eye. I look straight to impose thoughts on you that avert my gaze. I was trying to learn what you felt about me. My breast aches for a clean face. I never saw how my face looked without makeup. I touch it with a slight gesture before I look in the mirror. Years melt the faces of my face. No music comes out of distorted lines. An unbridgeable gap is formed between thoughts of others and who I am. I dig a hole in the earth of my soul that I may find you in the gray sea. I saw the road to you within myself. The web of past tense lost its charm. It kept me too much in closeness to the color of sensation. Green leaves turn gray with spring bequeathing her child to autumn. Things go by and the return does not assure that the letters you posted bring answers to questions as you drink music of swaying cornfields with lips of wine. Hands made histories that isolated language and the mind from working hands. I restored morality to the hands of history. The future belongs to children that I did not bring into this world. There might be other worlds, but going to one without children is a pointless one. Timelessness is a dream of the body. Nature refuses persistence. The mind bends toward death. The longing to cross the sea is a feeling that I could find the horizon. Islands along the way and countries where the sad eyes of men are momentarily awake to the sight of a rose from a distant past. I lived your past. I dreamt your future. Your look made me cry. It wasn't your look. The way you placed your hands close to your breast and looked at the sea. It was a scene from a movie I imagined. I stopped fighting my changing body. The romantic turmoil of my hungry body showed me the excesses of stressing through sleep. I counted midnight hours to make the years of my life. The instants before sleep were particularly poignant full with expectations. I talked to you before the dark took me into the eye. I'm vulnerable to the dagger in your hand. The dagger is vulnerable to my sleeping body. I leave stains that change the color of the dagger forever. Out of grayness of age I made red kites that flew in the breeze of infinity.

Flotsam.

My heart accommodated spaces in the suffering of the spirit. Though I never went past the shore I was nowhere within visibility of passersby that had homes to reach before night. Without looking forward to home I fall asleep at odd places out of exhaustion of keeping the eyes open to dust, smoke and litter. Home has a bed and a body in bed. I took bodies as they passed my sight. I gave bodies names and made stories out of lives. No one reaches home just like that. There was something missing before I left for the outside. I bring that missing sensation to the house I step in. I rest on a full belly. I sleep and wake to fears of what might happen to the body. The fact that nothing ever happens kills me. This nightmare of a walker past midnights, a friend of dogs and beggars, one who sleeps to die, the body denied of being, the silent philosopher, one that is no one, dis-

carded by idiocies of histories, not useful to prisons or madhouses, out of the spectacle, essentially a non-performer, one that haunts mirrors, an existence without language, the zero of vacuum, I embrace the death before life set in.

Gossamer.

In joy I was light as an unsaid word. I imagined the word waiting behind the lips of my friend. My friend teases by never opening the lips lest the word should escape and come to me. Teased to the point when I'm about to cry I felt the word dancing with light steps behind lips that smile. In a smile that conceals a word I felt the greenness of hillsides and blue wind across plains coming from the sea. These are scenes that one locked in the frenzy of cities imagines to keep moods alive. The friend is real. So is the sea, the green and the blue. I build scenarios as acts of meaningful resistance. I argue against cities as I do with the patriarchies of villages. I speak of communes. I understand communes as a society free of the evil of money and markets built on money. A society that rejects power as a basis to seeking love is the alternative. In suffering is a dream-like sweetness. Among friends I work out the basis of a life that retains the lightness of gossamer.

Nil.

When the spring of death arrives lovers turn betrayers. I'm on the verge of celebrating the coming of roses and poses appropriate for red, pink and blue. I forsook joys of arrival for the pain of departure. I was playing one game with different names. Water and light are preliminary intuitions. I fell for the wisdom of dark with a tinge of dryness. The cry of birth echoes in the silence of death. The mediocre think while the sensitive imagine. I'm the persecuted one tempted to hold my breath and save the thought of persecution from moving out of my body. Without an audience I'm in a desert of white moonlight. I build a stage where I breathlessly watch myself perform the last tango. What I was doing was a parody of a parody. I made jokes on masks. I made jokes on jokes that were not funny. I cared for the audience I loved. I laughed at how I could care for such a bunch of losers. I laughed louder than ever at my passivity that I took seriously for a profound gesture.

Choreographer.

The masks of the dying are fabulous in comparison to the colors of living. I don't meet my friend in death. I meet the friend in life. In death for a moment we're actors with the smile of oneness. The two dancers are the function of diverse intensities. There are moments of union that never complement one another. Call it one dance with two dancers or one face with two eyes. If I look in two directions they would be two dancers on two stages. In the mind I feel diversions. My friendship is closer to death than flowers on street corners for lovers on the way home. The signs of affection do not disturb the

twoness of things. I choose dying as much as living for you. Either way I'm drenched in rain of love. The dance of disunities comes alive as a spot in the eye. I dissolve and come out as two different beings. Either I'm male or I'm female. You fall in love with one body. In case I'm female you love the dance of resistance. In case I'm male you love the power of motion in the body leaning to the feminine. Oneness is how my body swells in making love to images. The disunity of forms is in the nature of things. The written word is not the same as silence. They are two snakes wound together on the dancing floor. I wait for music to stop because disunity kills me. My body is hurt. My neck is broken and dying is not easy. I stay awake until one sleep moves into another.