

Still Desire

by Alan Reed

published in Book
Dartington College of Arts, 2007

with thanks to Michelle Horacek

(a)

object-a.org

"I am still."

she might have said
if she could pass breath
and word
from her mouth.

"within white
and
silence
I am still."

cradling it in her hand
and
raising it
to touch her mouth
she moves
to her desire for

stillness.

inside of this
stillness
that is
strange to her

she forgets herself

and
in this absence of
herself
something other than
desire wells up.

she cannot claim
to know it
but, nonetheless

she is it.

she reaches for stillness
and she holds it
in her mouth.

"I am still."

she might have said
if her throat was not
stopped

"I am still
and
I am free of
the wet between my legs
and
my eyes closing while
my lips part."

she moves her hand
in small circles
over the pool of her stillness

her fingers just
touching
its surface

"I am spared
the pettiness of human things.
I am enshrined
in the pure white
of this quiet skin."

then
her fingers
tracing the shape
of that stillness
on her
lips

"I am untouched.
I will not be touched.
for me
there will be

peace."

she takes
stillness
into her mouth

spasms.

her head tilts
back

she hopes for stillness
to trickle down
her throat

a sweetness
like honey

she holds it there
then

stillness
lying in her hand
wet
with her spit

blood and
tears
rise to her face

and
her need for breath.

she holds stillness
she lays it down

takes it up
and holds it

in her hand
passing her lips

then
into her mouth

she feels desire

welling up
pulsing beneath
the imperturbable white
she has become

she might have
smiled
for the pleasure of this triumph
but
does not

she allows stillness
a tighter hold of her
and
watches
what is left of herself
swim beneath it

like fish
in a frozen lake

"in this freedom
from myself

I simply
am."

she would say this
but
she cannot.

she is no longer
a thing that
speaks.

her hands move
over stillness

asking it

"what am I become?"

she holds her hands
to herself

so that nothing of her
moves

without
needing to

when

she
stands

she places a foot
ahead of her

she shifts
her weight
onto
it

she places
a foot
ahead of her

and another

until the ground
beneath her
gives way
to
earth

the earth moves
between her toes

opens
to embrace her foot

she lifts it
holds it
in the stillness of the air

and
it is no use

the colour
of the earth's teeming life
stains her

she almost
says

"no. I will have
none of this.

none of the
ugly and clumsy
stumbling forward
and backwards
and blindly
forward
again.

I am still."

but
she remembers
not to

furious behind her face

she
places a foot
onto ground
less
treacherous

she shifts her weight

back

but
not all of her weight
passes so easily
back

into stillness

there are stains
on her

her feet
and
a blush rising
to her
skin

where her hands
may have brushed

wiping away
stillness
and leaving
where it was

a motion
remembered

she settles
lies still

but for the
blood
stirring
inside of her

she draws
stillness
between her legs

because
she remembers
that place

with her fingers
she lightly
plucks
stillness

tugs it

up the slope of
her belly
to the peak
of her
chin

she opens her mouth
for this
stillness

wide

in that path
leading up her belly
a blush rises

her desire for
stillness
drawing to it
other
desires

pulling deep
on her
breath

her back
arcing

for the
strength of
it

she stands
again

it falls.

her dirty feet
leading her

around the edge
of
her stillness

she holds it
in her hand

passes it to the other
she could confess
to a nervousness
an anxiety

but she will not.

from one hand
to the other
and back
again

until

she wanted it to

she does not understand
the seething reason
why

but
she knows

she wanted this to happen
but

the sound of it
smashing

not that

she gathers up
the trembling pieces
from
the ground beneath
her.

she holds them
places them
on the ground
again

she moves her hand
in small circles

her fingers just
touching
them

restoring
their surface.

she stands

she lets her feet
lead her

she keeps her hands
held tight
to her body

to keep it still

while her feet
carry her

back

the earth
waits
for her.

her feet touch it
and
it is as if
the earth sighs
to feel her
again.

it sighs
and it opens
her feet sinking
and

she feels the earth
close around her
like
a mouth

"more"

she would say
if it mattered
what
she said

she reaches down
for
the earth

there is no
peace
to the gesture

her hands
and
her arms plunge
into

she throws her body
down

she wallows
and she ruts.

if she were to
say something
without intending to

she would say

"if only the earth
could scrub
me
of this stillness."

she stands
and
she is filthy

the once white
surface of her
pocked

a blush rising
and
the thick muck
of the
earth ground in.

a vision of red
and brown

the memory of white

putting one foot
down
shifting her weight
forward.

the stately grace
of her stillness
bearing
a train of
unapologetic ruin
in her wake

she steps into
stillness

it resists
her
for a moment.

or
perhaps
she imagines that
it does

then
it closes round her
like a warmth
but liquid

she can breathe
inside of it
deeply

and
her breath
melts
into the warmth

she takes stillness
in her mouth

carefully

she bears it
to the earth

she bends
her mouth touching
ground

there is
a quiet
breaking sound
and

her stillness
trickles
from between her
lips

to join
the earth.

she
stands
and
she walks

her hands by her sides
her fingers
loose
the wind
passing between them.

she stands
inside of her
stillness

"I am still
this."

she could say
but she
feels no need

"no matter
that I tried to
forget.

I am still
this."

floating
alive
in a pool
of stillness