

## LIGHT READING

Lis Rhodes

who turned the light away  
the light away from her ?  
she will not be placed in darkness  
she will be present in darkness  
only to be apparent  
to appear without image  
to be heard unseen  
she lightens her own reading  
she reads by the reflection of herself

in mind of herself she listens  
she saw the story in a moment  
the end began where the beginning ended  
in the myth of her memory  
in the sound of her voice

the sounds were always behind  
behind in the depths of her mind  
drowned in the drumming of the passing days

her hands reached out  
she could only glimpse the shadow  
the faint reflection of the fading image  
stumbling in the traces of her knowing  
of her experience  
slipping amongst the shadows of history  
she couldn't reach herself

she begins again  
she reads by the sun  
her face to the moon  
she is guided by darkness  
threatened by those things that might have been  
could have happened  
surrounded by sounds no longer heard  
images lost from sight  
regathered to the sound of her voice  
reaped to the rhythm of her body  
the words dance in a moment of light  
the image of the story is apparent

the sense of the story is apparent  
but which moment of beginning  
follows which moment of end

is the end the beginning  
or the beginning ending  
she is told the end is not the beginning  
if it were she is told  
how could she know the witch from the witch  
the which from the why  
the which and the which would not be

the violence of sequence  
tears at the threads of her thoughts  
the folds of light fade into deep shadows  
the sense of her dreams is disturbed  
by  
the presence of a past  
not passed

a past that holds her with fingers sharpened on logic  
nails hardened with rationality  
cutting the flow of her thoughts  
forcing her back within herself  
damned by the rattle of words  
words already sentenced  
imprisoned in meaning  
shot full with the pellets of punctuation  
exhausted with explanation

in her own voice she cried  
the end cannot be confused  
with the end that ended  
somewhere  
but not here not here at the beginning

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end of reel  
end to end  
she raised her hand  
hold still shot of raised hand  
sound of shot still  
silence

she said that i was to wake her in an hour and a half  
if it didn't rain  
it is still raining  
what shall i do  
should i wake her or let her sleep longer  
she begins to read  
she reads in silence  
blurring her mind with the sound of words  
images reaching back into darkness  
stretch print the next frames six times

she tries to read  
the words fall away  
fall through  
her mind twisting in sharp circles  
herself circling in on herself  
diverging along sudden tangents  
tangents without direction  
there could be no direction  
on her own  
on her own she was just passing time  
passing time  
from one hand to one hand  
enclosed behind a closed door

cut ten black frames where the camera stopped

she slept a little this morning  
pale with self absorption  
flicker on camera - loop print with close-up  
over and over - round and round

her thoughts framed  
her image outside the frame  
re-framed - by whom  
in whose frame

end of second reel  
another camera movement  
fading to white  
join end to end  
sound of footsteps moving backwards and forwards

the closer she looked  
the more she resented herself  
for minding

could she not mind for herself  
could she not change her mind  
be mindless  
mind that which she had a mind  
to mind  
she said that i was to wake her in an hour and a half  
if it didn't rain  
it is still raining - what should i do  
should i wake her - or should i let her sleep longer

her head was cluttered with blank images  
perfectly symmetrical and transparent  
she could look at herself  
in reflection  
but the reflection was not hers

still of camera to man's eye  
still no sound

she writes on the small white frames  
turns them over  
hidden under the smooth surface  
her thoughts are framed  
in reflection

lengthen the next frames  
stretch hand in shadow  
frame paper in mid-shot  
move round from  
top right of frame  
in a complete circle  
no sound

framed in reflection  
her image fixed  
mistake at the beginning of the camera movement  
start again - sound of running footsteps

was she working back to front  
front to back  
images before thought  
words prescribing images - images prescribing sounds  
which was in front of why  
was it just the orientation of her look  
the position of her perception  
the back of the front

or the front of the back  
she listened  
she looked at the surroundings of the image

close-up of the title fills the frame  
the sound of the shot is louder

she watched herself being looked at

she looked at herself being watched  
but she could not perceive herself  
as the subject of the sentence  
as it was written  
as it was read  
the context defined her as the object of the explanation

total length four hundred and forty feet  
print next twenty feet head to tail

and now she wrote  
and now mountains do not cloud over  
let us wash our hair and stare  
stare at mountains  
how sweet are suns and suns  
and the season  
the sea or the season  
and the roads  
roads are often neglected

how can you feel so reasonably

polaroid photo with unseen barely visible  
camera movement - reading backwards  
hold last frame  
sound of shot - mixed with footsteps running in frame

the first drops of rain  
smash against the window  
the tree is olive with new leaves  
the white stairs let in light  
the intention or intensification is carried  
not by the action but by the illumination  
the sound of footsteps running away  
countering the inward movement of the zoom  
forced by the sound of the footsteps

to fear the constriction of the frame  
tracking herself  
through the frame  
captured contained  
she lost track  
include optical print of the first section  
pace the sound track exactly  
pace out a rectangle thirty by forty feet  
always moving in the same direction  
held in line - underline  
always under  
mis-framed  
in a blank frame  
invisible in mid-frame  
head of reel 1 ( 105 feet )  
title ?  
over exposed  
exposed as  
imposed on  
impaled by  
there had been no decision  
no choice  
it had been decided  
she had no choice  
cut  
she raised her hand  
stopped the action - reaction  
she began to read  
she began to re-read  
the story backwards  
it began

i dreamt last night that i was dead  
i was closed from my life  
from time and knowing  
i could see her and speak with her  
she was dead  
she said that i was to wake her in an hour and a half  
if it didn't rain  
it is still raining - what should i do  
should i wake her or should i let her sleep longer

there remained several strands  
each black and white  
threads of possible meaning

nothing was unravelled - nothing revealed  
she saw that she was both the subject and the object

she was seen and she saw  
she was seen as object  
she saw as subject  
but what she saw as subject  
was modified  
by how she was seen as object  
she objected

she refused to be framed

she raised her hand  
stopped the action  
she began to read  
she began to re-read  
aloud

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