

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

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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