

Katie Howes

Reference Point

So you think you've accomplished the lines, the cross-hatching,
the parallelism, the waves, the wellbeing of the paper, the tooth.
The electrolytes, the lithium, the spinning yarn atop the machines
in the mending store.

How did you get this far?
I'm a catch me if you can
and yes you want to
kind of gal.
I saw what the levels overhead were doing.
Never mind how they got there.
I mean it's flat, very flat terrain. That's a plane here.
They hovered in a parade, their balloons meant for heaven.

Getting on was the goal but not everyone could, not everyone stayed.
Leaving the plane hurts.
I know you're thinking that one can make a ladder or a net
to catch fallers, but I'm not talking about body pain.

I've never experienced this.
I know I dread it.

Stay With This

A blue and white plaid material suspended over the ceiling,
another version of the suspended dining room set,
and every one of us rising until we bump our heads.
“That’s not how I wanted it”—no one said that,
we knew we’d ease back down.

This couldn’t happen anywhere.
My mother’s ceiling fan
would never hang from my own ceiling.

Her young maples, one on either side of the walkway,
ready for staying, ready for replanting if her sister wants it.
I wanted to add something—here’s a stone sign
I found off the road up north. It’s a stone made into a sign
when I hurt my thumb and bled. Take it.
I’ve read about this—take it.

Here we are, together, you wish to say.
Close your eyes, hold each other’s hands for a moment.
Think only of what you’re holding.

Ekphrastic

This is a wall, this is a blanket this is a stick
maybe for walking.

This is some blue grey this is gray
this is the length of silhouettes created by distance and time of day.

These are part black part mulberry.

The sky is sea mint then pale blue then at the horizon robin's egg.

The bricks are orange pink egg-white and brown.

I really am satisfied with the red clay effect.

Check—Check-up

Call the doctor, call the dame, call the man who got her there.

Call the baby 20 years later and call the baby's lovers. Did you know this life would kill a stranger by accident? Did you know this life would be so boring? Did you know this life was going to become a poor example as a leader? Did you know this life will be pretty but contrite? Did you know this life will write a prize winning first book and write nothing thereafter? Did you know this life will live to be III? Did you know this life will become a high school Spanish teacher? Did you know this life was going to take so much time? so much money? did you know this life that you want to save, you won't care about after full term?

Go Ahead

After the gas station, I ran
home as discretely as I could
and fell asleep in the bushes.
I awoke to see my cat looking down
at me from behind the window.

I heard a kid's voice singing one note
over and over, getting louder.
I knew that if I stood up, I'd see the kid
waddling by, because that's
the way the note sounds,
and she'd be holding
the hand of someone tall.

The sun will set soon.
If I went around to the backyard,
I'd see pink between the ash trees.
In the morning, I'll be on the other side
of the door, sleeping,
and the sun will be rising.