

**Elee Kraljii Gardiner & Chris Turnbull**

**MESH**





this is how am I like the birdecomposition  
that stays still of auricles,  
as the house comes  
rushing towards it tiny, infinite  
atmosphere



I tramp a line down day after day  
all writing is desire without arrival  
and erasing blocks of text  
addictive trails ) ( I meant additive  
slowly slipping along like the snail

I receive the sun on my crown  
and for a moment forget the face  
without letting it go this is how desire works, too  
when not thinking about it  
I am moving towards and because of it

is an intensity such as mine additive or reductive  
or subtractive of my self and her condition?

water doing undoing, doing and doing, doing un—

do you see twelve footsteps  
alongside birdprints – clay,  
silt, layered fine sand—  
fragility in unknown  
sequences, synchronous  
gestures

the desire path of water is down the slope  
here I go up the hill again eeking another footstep  
out of the mud into my calf, pulling  
the word up the line as a syringe

a heavy scaled being on the bank:  
when I flip it over I see she has my own face

pollen  
in the rock

what does it matter if I am bird or fish  
aren't they the same in their difference from me?  
I swim through mothering into woman again and back  
the line wobbles through these areas  
dipping like Kandinsky's cane

I pull out the secondary sounds and weave  
them into a shirt I wear: this is politics

image meets snippet meets directive against angle  
the warlords act in digits, moving columns of men

every sense chaotic  
now

while I sit here and watch the reorder of history  
that's me, the teacher in the truck, the mother

holding hands with a child as a father says goodbye  
and turns to the commitment

Kraljii Gardiner & Turnbull

only that is not me at all

my woods are constant and fat with nutrition  
the shrill whistles are chickadees not bombs

being

eventual and also

confounded

by dispersal

increment immediacy

as if legitimately stable

entities  
currently coded

under what pressure  
does a seed break?



another trace and connector

who can go through windows as well as I  
into your eyes, through the pane  
as waxwing, into the screen and across  
the field of vision

when there is no leaving, there is no return, nor stasis

I materialize in a crowded field

t o d a y , tetrahedric fires, incendiary heat -  
c h a r , tree-cups, fallen grass - walls, doors, warped bikes -  
s c e n t raw

human witnesses - children, couples, families -  
neurally blinded - organs mechanical

how can I wrap the field in a tarp  
and slide it  
under my cape

*prepare for nascent ash  
there's no dousing an internal burn*

listen:

I hear leaves falling inside the house  
outdoors is still, the mice and squirrels  
have found the warmth of the engine  
and make their little blood pies

: something reeks and the dog loves it. or that. it takes a little while to adjust; the scent emanates from the field and can't be avoided. possibly it is biosolids, but I don't think it is manure of any kind — something is rotting. I hope it is not a human. I have found many dead species while in forests, ditches, and fields, not looking. they have not been in pristine condition and often I have found other parts elsewhere. is this a poem, this finding? imagine my family, say we were all sitting at a table together, they would wonder: what is poetry? they would say this poem does not rhyme or it sounds sexual, is its meaning sexual? they would not feel comfortable. someone would make a joke and the poetry moment would pass, the non-question question unanswered. I might have said, had we not moved on, that poetry is rarely what you think it is until it is torn up or left. on the rare occasion, I might add, when poetry emanates and people are gathered, sometimes those listening say 'hmmm' or 'ohhh', and that only happens when the conditions are right, and the words, usually, as invisible as this stench. my family, gathered, will say, "sounds boring", or something, and we freefall into a resonant and blank lacuna that is not the result of a loss of words as a momentary social disconnect that words can't fill. what we remember is a mutual and sometimes awkward struggle or transition to a stable next. to ease into things again, I might tell of the unknown someone who is tossing bird seed on the forest trail to attract and feed birds. they will all look at my face closely to see if this is an opening of a joke or some kind of fib; poets are untrustworthy, so said, even if family members are not. I will doggedly continue and say that a sign has recently been posted to warn people that birdfeed attracts bears and explain that the sign did not repel the bears, but people did avoid the area for several weeks. I would add that I heard that Facebook had posts about bear avoidance and how to successfully use bear spray, followed by more posts asking where bear spray could be found locally, as it had been recalled and Canadian Tire and other stores did not have stock. at that we would abruptly and simultaneously stand up to leave the table, as sometimes happens in families. if I had had time, I would have added that I had thought about writing small signs with "bird" on them to hang from as many trees as possible along that trail.

Tsvetaeva said

"There are books so alive that you're always afraid  
that while you weren't reading,  
the book has gone and changed,  
has shifted like a river;  
while you went on living, it went on living too  
and like a river moved on and moved away."

and I say the forest is not waiting for me any more  
than I am waiting for it

on the subway I cup my hands  
and build a pyre that catches green  
greening the breath

I spit green in the air  
roll green down the sidecars  
and think about the rats  
their trail in delicate footprints  
paws dipped in seawater, the glassine  
mirror of humidity collecting on tunnel walls  
and how the camera always the camera  
distills complicated life

into a reaction shot

Note:

MESH is a slow collaboration that combines, directly and/or conceptually, components of Elee Kraljii Gardiner's durational nature-based installations and Chris Turnbull's poetry and outdoor experiential pieces. The distance between the two specific sites from which Elee and Chris have collaborated (from Vancouver, BC and Kemptonville, ON) for MESH is approximately 877 hours by foot. "Mesh" delineates openings between strings in a net or woven fabric, but the strings are necessary components. Here, Elee's site-specific, procedural observations and unfolding poem offer spaces for Chris to respond to Elee's work — approaching Elee's poem in pieces — with conversation, notation, and tangents. MESH is comprised of emerging, evolving, written threads, fragments, and gaps that intersect on pages that change. MESH refers, reveals, and is disintegrating. A related piece from this project is forthcoming in "Touch the Donkey" (Fall, 2022).