

LOUISE SMITH



THE DRAWN MOON

with texts by Tamas Panitz

**Metambesen
Annandale-on-Hudson
2015**

THE DRAWN MOON
is the thirty-eighth
in a series of texts and chapbooks
published by Metambesen.

The reader is free to download and print it
without charge or permission.

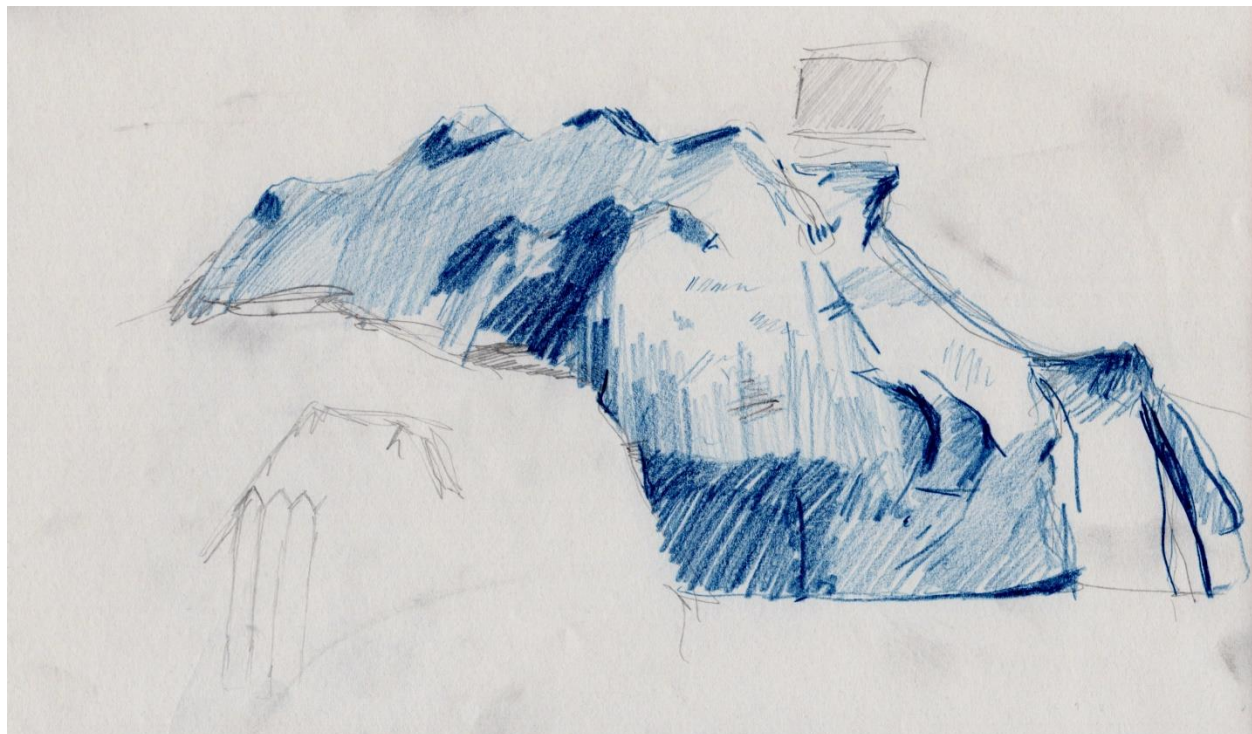
Images copyright © 2015 by Louise Smith
Texts copyright © 2015 by Tamas Panitz

a note on the text:

The images in every case came first. I saw Louise drawing a blue thing, blue and thing both, on the grass in a park along the Hudson, first day it was warm enough to do that. So what was to me a newly felt permission in the difference of medium opened doubly with the world outside. And I still feel that in these images: a re-opening of the actual world, a thaw, the glorious insistence of unbound *hyle*, but wiser than before, chiding you a little for ever having made it snow.

The order of composition — 4/17/15 - 6/5/15 — is here faithfully maintained. Titles belong to the poems; the images are untitled.

-TP



THE PERMISSION

This is the blue you know, the lumpen mountainous
fall from every window.
Fall of sight you let the world in

my boat blue modus
dinged deeply by sallow reeds
glides the way blue does its clever map-work
called everywhere anywhere, I wreck on the reefs
o merciless story blue is my name, any name, cause of nothing
I come nameless to this blue land.

Tell me, which is worse: that we always have to
make matter, the stuff already there;
or that it's color knows us, blue sun
sacré bleu?

Do we make matter to remember color?

I call forth rocks from the sleek inclinations.
I scuttle on your ribs
and sink straight through to that tireless situation.



STREET

The tree is a street of all my years
you walked right in
and I was everywhere,
chancy forest you step through this time
picking up the old route
the way things show you where to go.
In the alley you lift up the thatch-work shadows
a single tree
shadow of a whole forest. An open door.

*

I must have left my door open
my shadows loitering like broken stucco, like ragged scarves
you brought your preposterous machine
to measure my eye's drift across
my favorite wall how dare you do this to me
how dare you write my shadows, recall
the secret architecture of my life. How dare you
remind me. How dare I remember.

*

You left your pen darkening the curb wrong side —
into the sun, the fish-hook gave it away
there's only me here, same old story, anyone's
just let the lines tell, —
hysterics we all are, but this time my life with no me
nothing to go wrong
in this city everybody knows
the sharp windows
receive me like an old-time celebrity,
finally light enough to sprawl on the broken glass.



SIGIL

A floor like cod stacked
on the fish-market ice, a floor like Boston in October,

a floor to take me anywhere, to wait
around every corner, because take it from me:
motion has nothing to do with purpose.

Nowhere to go but everywhere to be,
no purpose but to do it
I don't know what I'm doing
but this smooth thing

call it what you will

that sign I make when I've finished at last
and careen across the floor left leg asleep.



THE MILL

I once heard the ice moving upstream
tricky as wolves, breaking its teeth apart
the way a sky clears
you've got to go into its mouth said the worshippers
of the great cow.

The story isn't interesting let me tell you about
the ice: wasn't matter, not nothing either,
in the wrong condition, wrong hemisphere
saying everything backwards, breaking itself
up the mountains. And the sun's fat
iteration plodded along the banks.

The story is you could sculpt whales out of water,
that the sun sinks and out walks a calf.

The story is that travel is material
and the river is mercury pulled from cinnabar ore.

That things without bodies come here
to escape the ignominy of being born.

& so eels reproduce,
& people walk out ready to begin,
& ducks born of moldering logs,
& bees from discarded carcasses.

The story is that water is a singular animal
clothing us
clothing our bare motion.

They say motion is the material of a current

strewn haphazardly across the earth
as it fell, as it crawled away, wild as rocks,
as wolves; sprang teeth, fell out
in beautiful dissuasions,

that it can snatch you up
and drag you through walls

that it's a city in the currents
of what everyone knows

& your thoughts walk the wet streets
with lives of their own

come back as people, isn't that what
matter says? How blue shows us its difference

serrated, toothy: climbs
against, breaks into you to say it.



TOHU BOHU

To get to the bottom of the sky
break open its surface.
On the other side of things,
another shy alchemist:
my house is a blue cliff; my walls the thrusts
and motion I lashed together
their hard blades,
and waited. I waited in the sound of bees
crossing into the language.

I waited for the word to show me
what it meant, strip to the muddy pneuma
the blue blades lay flat against.
I waited for the sky to take off its clothes
and show me its sensuous materials.

I built my house in the sound of bees
and in the morning I lick the white walls
and in the evening I lick the blue walls.
And there are no bees yet
And the taste of the colors is what you'd expect,
like drywall, dusty, uncared for.

What makes this architecture?
Why this precision

split from tohu bohu
it takes my whole being to confuse again.

Takes creating to make me forget;
to open the ground and find the roof of the world.

Your name sounds enough like Hermes
who clothes us
clothes the water in blue blades

the sky a white solid thing
so I can know it. So I cannot know her
but see her trail, the broken lines
the bees in long trails
hiding their chaos in light.
Can't you understand I had to build these walls
to forget them?
How I lick the walls and feel it licking back
on the other side, tremor of its quick tongue
as it works against this surface?
Until I can almost remember how it tastes.



COLORIMETRY

You opened up the light
not the sloppy green hills, not that color
but cross-beams and transoms

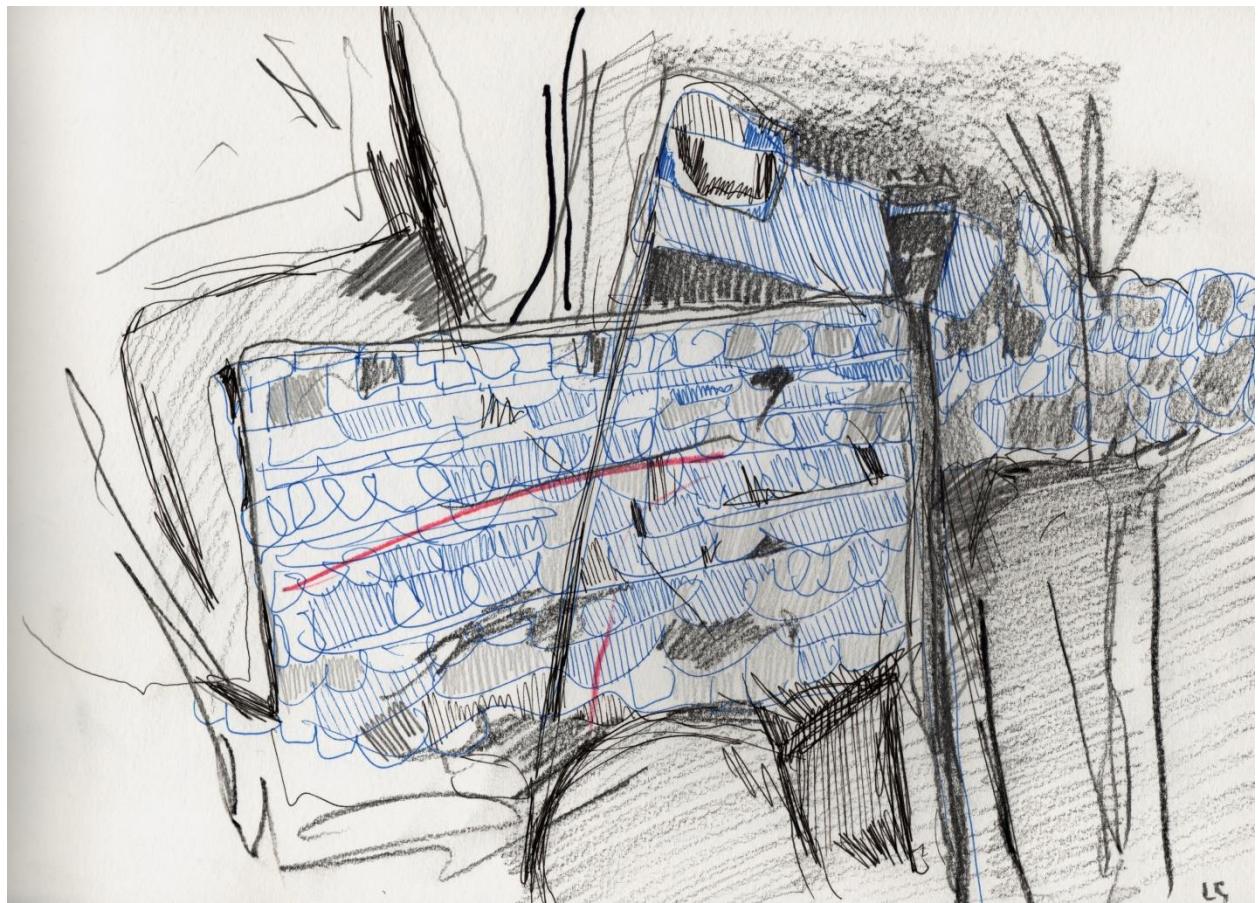
what good is the spectrum to a painter
lobster claw and birds' feet
ra ra
 red means yes

the old shapes, I adored them
fish and flower you threw in
my funny walk
dissolving into what it knows
a dog stuffed back in a man

I can see her above it all,
I see her above but she intends below

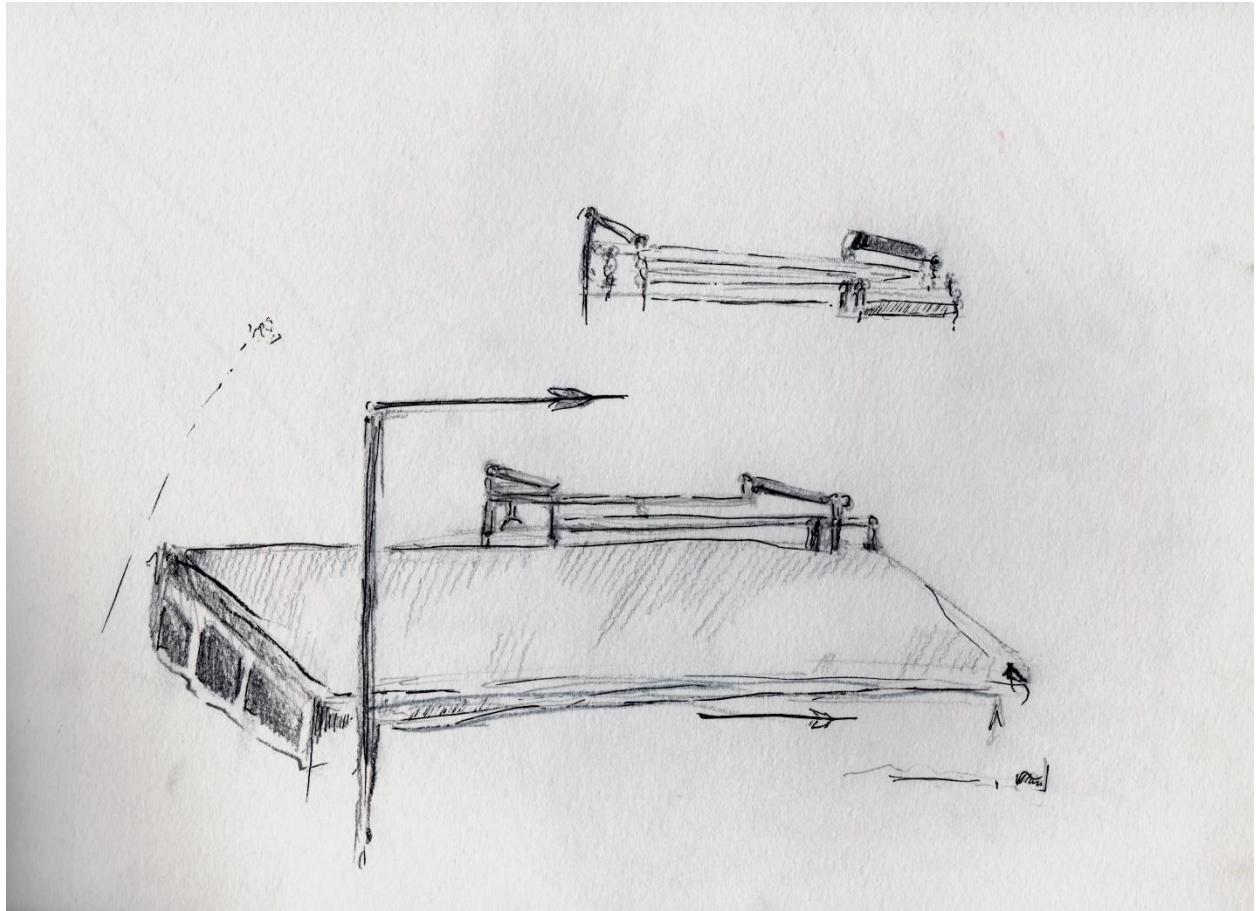
letting color do its actual work

scribbling its novel under the over-pass
hands dirty from all you dream.



ATHENS

The thinnest hand swats the sun away
and what are we left with:
Athens, city of blue and marble
for people who don't drink water
unwatered down, to be here is to be fire,
a red flash opening in the earth
air pouring from it. So much air here.
Our business done so fast,
the marble doing its best
to stand on nothing but this color
this place always there, waiting for you.
Pluck one of its flags from the sky.



LAKE

1.

The lord of silence, thou shalt not say
his name, his name's too long: he flicks his
wrist — he is other, more than that; not the bull's
horns but moons and moons breaking between them.
Two people lying on the grass. And the sun says
something, and the fisherman says something.

2.

Silence. *Confession*, they call it (to know silence
by contradistinction): to get clean. It's so clean here.
White sand. I forget as hard as I can
to get to the other end of this.

3.

She made my hand as much hers as mine this is the temple
she said, that to touch is to be touched.

4.

The eye-hand is the skin of the world,
whispered the white. I put my ear to her and saw
the figures of dream walk down from the sky.
I had long ago mastered eloquence. I listened.
The wide wind brushed against me. I listened for
its name. The wind became an arrow on a pole. East
it said, where there is no shore. That is the meaning of skin.



She drove the Lamborghini of lines
oiled slick on the pink marble streets
the ones Poe lobbied for in Baltimore.

I saw my reflection poured out under the street's glassy floor across
buildings through the park and asked:

what material is this that undoes the mechanics of distance?

*Sight itself produces material, she said,
line without measure
passionate emissaries for no shortest route
requires no distance, no friction;*

*I drive what's between us, lie on my shadow on the grass this slick
forgiveness.*

Here.



1.

I told you not to sit on the grass
wet it was early spring you fell right through
missing lady, what's ever left, a brown aura
curvy periphery and the sun burning three
as I strain after you. The lineaments of sight
is all she left me, a frame shaped like her:
murky contour, an open door. Egypt.

2.

You were there when I opened my eyes
bigger than the world I've sought you ever since
this morning. Get back in there if I have to
sift through the whole again,
I've done it so many times fall in love
the curve my own footsteps a burr on my sock

3.

αγω, led her away
the way the way is
a matter of course

the immortal palm,
lines without beginning or end
this single act, doesn't matter where to

blue break in the clouds but is it from down or up
somewhere in a scummy puddle

before galoshes
single course wise with histories
all of them, again and again you splash,
start it over new.

4.

Melody you might remember
feral child stumbles across violin
the same line folded like marble
now here now there pick a piece:

color is line isolated in time.
Same story wrong body.

Wrong? Just different,
just me singing to you
scratching through the far

scratching anywhere
isolated from time

and it dawns on you —
piece after piece of

long grass rustling against
your thighs you're the wind

coming from the wrong direction
rough and singular —
you hear every part but don't know
what it means, until it means you:
the other side of a word, come to learn everything again.



TOMIS

Under a newly scored sky, the way it sometimes is, Sunday in Brooklyn,
a yard of curly ogham: the letters grown over their meanings.

Who can read this: the black line presses my face in, to pliant turf there.

The jiving rift of measure itself dictates me from behind, stretches forward
into that pretended origin, where the line breaks and reappears, folded
like Tomis on the Black Sea, where Ovid lingered, and the city was an
alphabet unfolding on his lips.



THE DRAWN MOON

The moon is a cave, everyone knows that
stars of light out of earliest thoughts

drawn out, from where it turns in you
turns real, draws itself clear.

We are so vulnerable.
Hands telling the truth on us, on what we thought

we had. So once more look over your shoulder
and for the first time listen to what the moon has to say.

Moon says me. In this theatre, I sing reflected under
the nunnery windows, this city across the river

this greatest secret you first saw in you, and lost across
the world, danced under, flamenco wise

in the privacy of tambourines. Like a cave, the moon
is like a cave, I say, it's all in the collarbone (and brain, spine, it's you),

rift of the real you run your hand along: eating the city
gathering up the moon to take back with you.

Back to the moon. But we're already there.
Who could know this but a cat? Who else could have seen it,

long ago, in Switzerland, where the moon returns to itself
in the caves. What could it mean but love me with your private animal.