THE VOTE [as read & arranged on 3.4.17]

1 [Some said it was a portable electronic switch heating up and suspended in space
it purred absently like a fattened unblinking animal unaware of itself
so some sat behind thin curtains grinning others concealed it under a dark cloth]

2 a document, I vow to
desire to

3 A bigliness rose out of the grisly thusliness, a
votive, or a flotilla of votives predicated
on the realm of the incendiary
Tillering down river,
the efficacy of which, or in which
I would like to believe, but glancing
down ticket I can't help but be reminded of standardized tests
Short answer, long answer.

4 It's JUST TOO GREAT
To IMPOSE A SHOW OF HANDS
To WORSEN THE STANDOFF
To HAVE BALKED
When FORCED TO DEFEND
LET'S CALL OFF
PROTECTING YOUR TUITION
DOLLARS
SUGGEST BETTER RELATIONS
THE VACUUM CLEANER HE
BOUGHT ON CREDIT
IS HARDLY TREASON
He CHECKED THE
AGRICULTURE PRICES AND
THE WEATHER
HE DID THE MATH
AMASSED A $554 LATE FEE
SO WHAT
THE LIGHT AT THE END OF
THE TUNNEL
IT'S SECURITY AND STABILITY
THE COMMITTEE LAUGHED IT

OFF
With a show hands

From the beginning the nothing we held on to
was hammered & uprooted always planted in the outskirts.
Shifted the margins these gargoyles all I can give you now
their fallen perch and faces divided to pieces. What was
rummaged from dead tongues what was left
after the auction in back alleys we stumbled upon
we never discovered.

[Ashley]

In the Land of Concessions, I am a subtle voter.
My vote is not a show of hands or a voicing;
it is sealed behind a curtain or inside paper.
I vote with flimsy wishes, not understanding *my vote*
as *my vow*, *my promise*, *my undertaking*.

I'd like to disbelieve in see-through-ink and lovelessness.
I'd like to re-ink, re-intercess, re-vow, re-choose a blue-black ink of some syntactical belief.
I'd like to draw in actual ink for example an actual blue-black horse and believe it moves.

my vote for you for you, my little *yes*

a sign of my

shall be heard

and with respect to when

we listened and it led to riots to newer technology [we couldn't keep it updated anymore
nevermind back it up nevermind it couldn't save us] it should have hacked us to pieces

[since it probably happened while others were showering off dirt planning absences
it happened therefore as the light bulbs cooled in the careful darkness]

11 If honest with yourself body impervious to dance or desire for dance
Ask: what fills (infiltrates) the ears really?
I walked three times around the city block and could not find the door into the rally or the riot
It always looks sillier from sidelines, what you do not also feel

12 I think my hand is tremoring though. I think I'm too spent from merely work to traverse distance.
In every tremoring hand, a syntactical distance to hold the pen still enough to firmly ink-move.
The distance between the actual imagined horse and the actual history of whipping of horses.

13 And what was left—

The horses in their blue graves, horses crumpled as parchment
erasures in grim mounds, what was left in the After of having carried
the freight and been touched only by the cruelest and slightest antennae
of men, bodies that had carried every city, every shrine, stone by stone
and done the digging, and done the praying, and done, worked to the thin stripe of
oblivion beneath the sting of wire and boot and whip and what were they before all this
of being Beast and flat-backed, carriers of the race, huffed to death around the track to the
music of whistling and strange names, bandaged and bled or held sharply by the mouth
and beat like a bag of fluff, admired, loved, even, but beat, or burned and numbered
and what was left, what

14 We too are America. Our backs silent, bent in factory lines,
In fields and orchards, in quiet cubicles and office towers.
We too are America. Visitors. Migrants. Refugees.
Students from afar. We are no one in the eyes of the law.
Uncounted, unmarked, ghosts within a nation of ghosts,
citizens of nowhere. We have no vote to cast, but lean on yours.

15 Let's pause for a moment while the votes are being tallied
The judges' decision will be final, but you at home
Have the chance to select your favorite contestant
Before the council meets. Which one will survive:
Danny, the customer service rep from Bible Electric,
A full service contractor for sectors throughout Colorado,
Arizona, Sonora, Crimea, Nineveh, Edom
And Uz. For there shall arise false prophets,
And shall show great signs and wonders.
If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

16

all my parts I impart to you/
my choice/ my little

17 I vote with my indecision. I vote with my avoidance.
I vote with little knowledge of other languages.
I have voted *it has nothing to do with me*.
I have voted with an assumption that others vote with love.

18 Promenade with me to the landfill
Under a padded sky
On the first night I dreamt a calla lily eating an oil spill
On the second night I dreamt I was the oil spill and had eaten
the ballot that was the calla lily
On the fourth night I arrived at the landfill
And the landfill was full of sticky chess pieces

19 The blue-black horse has stopped beside blue hollyhock.

In every blossoming blue petal, a slow-mo tremor. In every tremor, the effort to control and reclaim it slowly. In every vote, the reigning and reclaiming of the distance traveled to vote, a kind of ever blue blossoming of petal-bruised tips,

the tips of the thousands upon thousands of tremors, what the scratch marks float in.

20 echo in the speaker of color

thumb-sized berries

how much is the disconnect? consigned to white leaves

that anyone could be convinced otherwise

may not be based in fact

but the fact is collective

emotion is fact, malleable

through story so I emptied first by cracking my knuckles to the violence

21 [Ashley]

22 until as it lumbered from job to street to whatever lay in our laps like books
one after another [consequently it lost the sequence of days] the tooth's crunch

[also it knew a kind of limit no one else acknowledged its edges thinning like old shirts
moreover it was uncountable of course it lost track of the great size of small numbers]

23 For the Right to vote is an act of declaratory judgment
A procedure has been submitted by the chief legal officer of the United States

24 line up in groups of salted teeth
in fields. Pathos is a city
across the river from Desire
except the river is burning
and both cities might be burning
and oh the people don't care.
Or do they care too much?

25 Desire for desire is still desire of agreements which equals:
Desire of dominance of someone's totality of mind over someone else's totality of desire-mind
Avowals meaning we are still ruled by the tribal which is theory of promises
Note down-tick in emotion at the backs of crowds where sound is turned down

26 bundle, *to assure the right of the citizens* / my little bundle
is not denied

27 I have covered my chest in stickers to persuade votes.
I have watched tv instead of marching my vote.
I have voted *the lesser of two evils* more often than I have voted *great belief*.
I have voted in desperate times but done no dance to back it up.
I have lived with those privileged enough to abstain.

28 I wear my secrecy on my sleeve
My tenacity in the roll of my cuff
I wear my tiger's leap on the tip of my tongue

29 Want of tribe is want of vow fulfilled by other is want of delivery floated down on wings
Desire's root being sidereal wingfulness of wish draws desire as a thing that enters us but is not us
Will of the separate vs. the tribal is will of crowd full of the believing that they are choosing
Intoxication of minds dancing is still just another expression of desire felt or un-met

30 of protest stuck like a note on my lids it read

the right to vow, oh well

on the freeway *mouths cottoned with offal*

processing memory, its people holy where its managers

cannot remember
water into the icon of flesh, the body id

devout for the camera

its victors leaving

November to the grotesque

act of clapping

32 but
calla lilies falling on the earth,
marking the place for God to see. *If I cannot see then I shall feel you.*

33 I'd like to think the horse is drawn with shaky lines but actual love, that nothing is see-through

that shakes. That tremors flit like hollyhocks in wind the shadow horse's shadow-nostrils whiff.
I think I'll leave the horse here snorting sweet air, a kind of distance test.

34 I scrawled my little prayer on a broken piece of tile.

I thought Haley had been treated unfairly,
Though even if she suffered, her teammates suffered more,
More obscurely, under cover of darkness,
While the boundaries blurred between what was chosen
And what had been historically imposed. Taylor and Tyler,
The franchise owners, made a rare appearance,
Which failed to dispel the rumors of their demise.

35 *Provided*, Such prerequisite, practice, or procedure may be enforced
The Right to vote shall not be denied or abridged with any test or device in any State
with respect

36 [yet it couldn't be unscrewed or trusted we had to guess always at its inner workings]

[and even though it undressed the neighbors in their wildly tattered robes
it beat like two ventricles inside a black wooden box] so we gripped chairs

37 Of the United States, let it be said there is an authorized procedure of submission
The examiners for each political subdivision shall examine applicants' qualification
for voting

38 my father when his head gets shaved/when they make him take his clothes off
my father's knees while he studies / test to make him /

39 [Rachel]

40 We too are America. We are made of the same loves and fears.
When you raise your hand, do you think of us?
How heavy the ballot in your hand must be--
how heavy that weight: our lives, our families,
our labors won and lost, gambled on the whims of strangers.
Alone or together, we carry the same dreams as yours.

41 Come, congressmen. Kneel at the edge of what suffers forever
outside the pale language of the law, excluded from the word. You who think the past is scattered as
the ashes of a cigarette, that our grief like a small breeze might be mended by a curtain, Here:
The crushed murmurations rising at the edge as a flock of Pegasi breaking from blood—

42 Assignation of consensus by desire, or desire for consensus
Sweeps into the body of the neighbor and then into the neighborhood

43 The Right to vote on account of race or color:
The Right to vote, the failure to comply with standard practice or procedure
To assure his failure to comply with the rights of citizens of the United States

44 To admit what was distant, a land of milk and the hunted
to stand under the sentence
to filch a parade of presences,
knights and bishops, each piece specific
in pieces in ballots in black and white
tiled like computer keyboards, retired under a lover's foot

45 what makes a citizen of me?

46 [Ashley]

47 I have learned what silence has granted and what it has given up.
I have been sheltered, allowed to exist within.
I have yielded to privilege.
I have failed to construct a new narrative where an official mythology existed.

49 Any person whom the examiner finds inconsistent with the Constitution
And laws of the United States shall promptly be placed on a list of ineligible voters—
A challenge made in accordance with sectioning of the appropriate State or local
election—official

51 I'd like to disbelieve in see-through ink and lovelessness.

52 meanwhile trees drifting into space untethered fell around us blackened hills
[as we connected we fixed them] [as others placed a value on their beetle-bored bark]

during the night too it hid in the day's blinking [in the dots amid space] in plain sight
a "test or device" now a sourceless code [whatever it used to be in love with] lost

53 *Provided*, That no person be entitled to vote
A certification that a copy of the challenge and affidavits have been served
By mail or in person upon the person challenged at his place of residence set out in
the application

54 I vow to / desire to / hold you/ in my arms
my arms /to/

send you
back

55 [Rachel]

56 Vote gives: illusion of choice for the how of our living but
Deceptive, desirous architecture of choice is in the hand of *the choicee* in fact
Who put the things you & I did not truly need or want (save for the money and that pen, maybe)
In the stupid plastic bag in the first place

58 Our hopes are as long as visa lines, as unreasonable
as orders penned by mad men in the palest of rooms.
Every morning we wake and the world is more perilous.
When we step out into the light, we do not know
if we will return, if someone is casting a vote,
or if someone is casting us away. We too are America.

59 The decision of the hearing officer may be filed in the United States court of appeals
Provided, The times, places, procedures, and form of the application
Provided, A listing removals from eligibility *Provided,* No person acting under the
color of law is guilty

NUMBERED ORDER OF READERS

1. David
2. Consuelo
3. Haji
4. Lily
5. Jake
6. Ashley
7. Coleman
8. Endi
9. Consuelo
10. David
11. Dao
12. Endi
13. Stephanie
14. Neil
15. John
16. Consuelo
17. Coleman
18. Haji
19. Endi
20. Ally
21. Ashley
22. David
23. Shayla
24. Jake
25. Dao
26. Consuelo
27. Coleman
28. Haji
29. Dao
30. Ally
31. -
32. Stephanie
33. Endi
34. John
35. Shayla
36. David
37. Shayla
38. Consuelo
39. Rachel
40. Neil
41. Stephanie
42. Dao
43. Shayla
44. Jake
45. Consuelo
46. Ashley
47. Coleman
48. -
49. Shayla
50. -
51. Endi
52. David
53. Shayla
54. Consuelo
55. Rachel
56. Dao
57. -
58. Neil
59. Shayla