LIZARD ERA

coco gagnet

The first night I dreamt of lizards was in Seattle, in a white bed with a blue quilt.

The lizard was impossibly large and statuesque and silent. It was under a spotlight of unknown origin that diffused into nothingness.

Lizard dream number two: there were many lizards in a terrarium, though they did not seem to be trapped. I recognize none of them, and I am impressed with the ability of my subconscious to either invent many species, or to have called them up from an encyclopedia looked at long ago and forgotten.

The third Lizard dream, psychedelically induced. I’m awake in a wood. The whole world is made of lizards. I see them in the rocks and they are eating one another, it is consumption without violence. They were also trees, moss, and ferns. I am scared, or jealous, of their indifference.

The last Lizard dream: There are massive stone towers, they are stalagmites, but mountains, and exposed, not in any sort of cave. I am standing on one. At the bottom there are green pools, opalescent and mineral. I need to get down, but it is impossibly high. I am afraid to jump, I know if I jump I will hurt myself, maybe I will even die. I confront that I must take my time. I climb down and there are small black lizards everywhere, perched on rock. We are looking at each other. They have nothing to give and yet they are there. I get to the bottom and it is sharp, there is someone waiting, and they offer me a pair of flip-flops and I think, “Yes I need those.”

When I look up the significance of Lizards I read that their presence indicates that whatever is happening in the dream is *especially* urgent, as dreams are always urgent. They are asking us to pay attention. what does this mean if the dreams were almost always about the lizards themselves? Their knowing, and my suffering?

I am left believing that maybe it is ok to go slowly, that maybe comfort is a lie, and that maybe

when I have been held I have not been safe.

The Lizards have since stopped visiting. I wonder where they have gone, but I no longer resent them for their absence, Simone Weil says “to love is to consent to distance.” This is a relief, as even when we were close we were strangers. But together, in the liminal space of our impassable gulf, we had a vision and I was terrified.

I.

HOW TO TRAVEL

**dimes**

At a cafe in Chinatown

Yung, who is 95, plays Erhu, unannounced.

No one tells him to stop

Because he is old.

If you steal something, you will

lose it eventually.

Though he does not possess this place, it belongs to him.

**things have always been this way**

i get into a cab, and the driver is an accomplished whistler

he is Greek, he says he has lived here since ‘70

that the last time he walked in Williamsburg, it was the 80’s

and he had

two guns in his pocket

this is

ancient philosophy

driving over the bridge at night

Lili says Manhattan looks like a jewelry box,

a big,

open jewelry box.

i am sick of this city.

an island full of so much person and place,

i have adorned myself

with pearls

i am

naked

later, in another cab,

i am very drunk, and I put my arms around the driver’s shoulders

i ask him to whistle. He is hesitant, but he does it.

I am holding him and,

we practice our whistling together,

in the dark.

singing sad, wordless songs,

that have

piths of air.

**to pray at your own altar**

Paul Karason has blue skin

he “suffers” from Argyria,

what comes of drinking

too much silver

the silver rests

in the skin, and

reacts with light

like a photograph.

maybe he was trying

to stand still

you look at him, in pictures

and he is

pouring out

some insanities

are wise

**seeing you today for the second, third, or fourth time**

in oklahoma

i pass a hard rock casino

that i wrote about

two years ago

"hard rock casino

pleasure factory

in the middle of nowhere"

i am here again

i am leaving home

to return

im on the other side

of the break

this is a spiral

blowing bubbles

with chewing gum

when they pop

they stick to my face

and there's metal playing

we're gonna drive thruuuuu the night

**making is the same as waiting**

Lamar Advertising

is responsible

for most billboards in america

does understanding mean

more

or less

magic

a legacy of lives

dedicated to signs

II.

VESSELS

**fill a vase up with water**

security makes me think of

a locked door

i am

overwhelmed by all of the rooms i am

not in

though I feel them

their chairs

                     gravid

with memory

in ancient times

the upper class

might dissolve pearls

in wine

for better health

did they know they were

 making love to a wound?

**of all places**

last october

my lover called me

from very far away

he said

he was having dreams

about shaving his head

i should have known

he sought my voice

because

he felt no power

today i will cut my hair

i wonder if there will be any left

from two years ago

when it is gone

may i surrender

the love

that belonged

to former selves

one strand is

sedimentary superposition

strange to carry something

that can no longer be yours

to feel its weight

on your own amphora

the hair is gone

but the vase

is still filling up

and emptying out

quickly

**dear simon**

tassels

horses

white underwear

green calcite you swallowed and served up like venus / a pearl

orange, and not a sunrise earlier than expected

a shelf that never ends

watching you water your plant makes me cry

kissing that is never a resignation but sometimes a repose

will i always look at you through a pair of marble legs, and think I have found the frame

when i met you it made me angry, and i asked for more because you were in a room really using it

collapsing the space between visions when everything was already touching.

bringing in an empty deli case from the street

& dreaming of

turning it into a butterfly house

being sure to pick the right fork

I feel bad about rushing you out the door - the person who has taught me the sensuality of patience. You are a process I am longing to learn.

salt of the earth

bull in a china shop not breaking anything

cord of communion

I hope the lilies never bloom. awaiting their impermanence, I do not wish to smell them.

knowing that you are in the ether I am *good*, I am low to the ground, listening.

why is everyone looking to float? Why do we memorialize climbing mountains, but not descending them? You have to know how to get down.

most deaths occur near summit during descent

maybe if I could depict enough objects, there would be a material to call this thing that is not a thing, but is still some how able to be carried.

can you always know what you, understand?

a revelation shrouded by the fact that it cannot be seen, only tasted.

1 million greek vases holding some, thing

the viscera of desire

awaiting your arrival.

in a room of red you are blue.

**a wishbone in the deli case**

i never like feet

until the morning

a lover

grabs my left foot

and cradles it

while sliding up to greet me

and i find myself

steadfastly in the world

wishing is erotic

in the greek sense

he puts my right nipple

in his mouth

outside

someone practices an italian aria

this morning there are

no wishes cast

III.

FLOWERS

**(de)compose**

i feel like i

live on my knees

you know

what happens to dead leaves

in the spring?

my friend says

earth worms in america are

post-columbian

i don’t trust the internet

but I pray to it

i only curse myself

because awful is easy

and the staircase

ascends

**there’s no such thing as the center of the universe**

when a baby stares at me I feel

special

selected

babies are omnipotent,

they do not see distinction

between themselves

and the world

maybe this is their hallowed piety

that there is no other

i am suddenly

an inalienable part

of some, thing

and if I am able to elicit a smile

I am, its happiness

there will be

no such thing

as delusion

**the mother who only cares as a means to care for herself**

my friend tells me

about an old boss

who would eat 30 peaches a day

each time

i retell this story

the number gets a little higher

things get a little stickier

i'll paint my body with this

and deliver it

to a sentimental marble altar

how long have we been

breaking bread

and tending to slow fruit

and wearing an apron

as a barrier

still soft enough for an embrace

hyancinth

become cloying

when you smell

their disintegration

i am no longer enough

to call you what

you are

**meditation on nothing in particular**

i love some thing,

it is specific, but unmasked

if I need sanctuary I can

make up a Truth.

could i collect the stamens

of crocuses in the spring

and make my own saffron.

sometimes birds fly in

when the door is open

and trap themselves

looking at the moon,

it occurs to me

that I will never see all of her

at once

a lover is milk without

a container

you can never hold

so you slurp them off the floor.

my mind is a bedroom

and tonight

I sleep with my head

at the foot

**not golden age**

My friend told me

That long ago

The Dutch would bet on tulip futures

How funny to gamble with things held sacred for their precariousness

Stranded between earth and ether

A whole economy built on flowers

IV.

THE BREAD SECTION

**how do i feed myself**

In yellowstone

i cry three times

because i've wasted a loaf of bread

and all my relationships are flat

**spiritual poverty**

a room can smell like the spit

that dries on your face

after you make out

with someone

maybe i

fixate on the physical

because i do not know

what i am like

so

bread sopped up with

olive oil

is its own religion

the mouth is the first

liminal space

the lips

a prophecy

driving into the sun is a trust fall

and no one

has ever really written about

true love

i wonder if

roots

feel claustrophobic

when they

lick the dirt

**ways to feel safe**

things i've done while driving

without

a sense of consequence

text

close my eyes

cry

masturbate

butter bread

**kaya’s poem**

break your personality

every day

do not love yourself

do not know what’s going on

fuck a habit

look around you

ancient wisdom

for a new era

oh and

space is not there

to be filled

**cowgirl opus**

a cactus

green and stalwart

holding some thing inside

so as to not go thirsty

i come from

three generations

of left handed women

three times this month,

i have seen dogs, collarless

running down streets

concurrent with traffic

i don't know if this says something about freedom

winter burning in effigy

cowgirls write with the legacies of seashells

the scallop is a symbol of

pilgrimage

used for baptisms and

as ashtrays

in longing we find

stillness

on bad days i wonder why

i have not been thanked

it is a grand vacillation

we have travelled so far

to meet the quietness of space

with our own

the sky is not gentle tonight

my socks smell bad

but i don't want to take them off because

it means

the day is over

in an empty parking lot

nothing touches light like nothingness

this is not arcane

but

my vision starts changing

just then

colossus ticking vermillion

oh my

all the beautiful things i have peed on

cowgirls are always

looking towards a horizon that is

blue and orange,

pregnant with hope and melancholy

and we can’t quite catch

it

*choke*

too true to transcend

behind closed eyes

there are horses

galloping

across blue, veinous stages

all the sureness of the world

compounds

in their joints

last night

i dreamt of my first lizard

in a long time

i feed it

bits of fruit

the monolith

of my emptiness rises up

to kiss me