

DIVINING FOR STARTERS

Also by Carrie Etter

The Tethers

as editor, *Infinite Difference: Other Poetries by UK Women Poets*

Divining for Starters

Carrie Etter

Shearsman Books
Exeter

First published in the United Kingdom in 2011 by
Shearsman Books
58 Velwell Road
Exeter EX4 4LD

<http://www.shearsman.com/>

ISBN 978-1-84861-150-4

Copyright © Carrie Etter, 2011.

The right of Carrie Etter to be identified as the author
of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the
Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act of 1988.
All rights reserved.

Contents

I. Landed

Divining for Starters (2)	13
Divining for Starters (18)	14
McLean County Highway 39	15
Prairie	17
Treeline	18
Seed	19
Invalid	20
Paternal	21
Orange County, Year Five	22
Alaskan	23
Divining for Starters (36)	30
Estate Management	31
Poem for Two Voices (3)	32

II. Erotics

Divining for Starters (53)	37
Divining for Starters (67)	38
Any Given Summer	39
Two, Post-Pastoral	40
Subterfuge for the Unrequitable	41
Divining for Starters (77)	51
Poem for Two Voices (4)	52

III. Divining

Under beer and on the humid	57
Election	58
The Occupation of Iraq	59
Divining for Starters (68)	60
Ache	61
Divining for Starters (63)	62
Divining for Starters (58)	63
Poem for Two Voices (1)	64
(T)here	67
Divining for Starters (20)	68
Divining for Starters (64)	69
Divining for Starters (16)	70
Divining for Starters (54)	71
Divining for Starters (42)	72
Divining for Starters (71)	73
Divining for Starters (38)	74
Divining for Starters (27)	75
A Starkness in Late Afternoon	76
Poem for Two Voices (2)	77
River Seam	79
Notes	84
Acknowledgements	85

for Claire Crowther

I

Landed

Divining for Starters (2)

considering human cell division

that piling days indicate toppling hours

here the cellist raises her bow

(what now on the leaf)

and fifty years ago schoolchildren rolled mercury over their desks

isolate and social

divining for starters

which stone drives the ripple

going for circumference, provision, and jasmine

another delicate startle

on the rancid plateau

Divining for Starters (18)

The small stand of trees now quickened by a gale, each leaf
losing its discrete

And again a rest that resembles languor for the light
nearing noon

The unseen, sunseen work of chlorophyll I know and don't
know proceeds

The reflexive work of the body apace despite its seeming
reticence

Yet I linger on the tree as though it alone

And again a rest that resembles languor for the light nearing

McLean County Highway 39

tar shrugs goes to dirt
gravel's slow crunch over
winter with no hill for
frost to the horizon

*

green hectares rising into
Illinois' no blond endeavour
but for the corn tassels dangling
covert silk threads

*

cycle up dirt-dust's brown haze
flattening thought a prairie
the only height for miles
a grove its doe

*

sweat and cornstalks taller than
pushed through the close
click into speed sticking hairs
peel the nape free

*

all exhale the green expanse
cicadas' two notes sunset
the red eye pink strata
push an unwavering line

*

without thought three miles out
an idle porch swing
shrug or flattening not silence
but nothing heard in

*

soybeans crouch along even as
horizon at my back
cools toward streetlamps and cement
glide in the last

Prairie

sprawling through night a train's low horn
the crossings empty the drivers' ritual
maintained reflex or especial precaution

do the sleepers hear it do their ears
make unconscious record to litanize

a prescience without particularity unbound
on prairie to vague expectation
with or without hope

with or without the train whistle's
thread reminder redeemer

of silence each isolate mind
banked in prescience if it's not nostalgia
impalpable in small hours impalpable

in the drift as names ease from objects
unmannered ritual especial withoutness

Treeline

What meets behind the trees

(it is the arc of a sigh)

what must, what does, what may

(from the floor tiles of would-that-I-were-not)

faith or science or

(the vice must be adjusted to allow movement without escape)

the shortest article in world news: a new planet, perhaps

(the swum line)

that aery sustenance

(the arc, as in the degrees of perception)

one assuaging glimpse