

SAMPLER

Epic Series

ALSO BY ELÉNA RIVERA

Scaffolding, Princeton Series of Contemporary Poets, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ

Light Tremor, Estepa Editions, Artist Book, Kate van Houton, Paris, France

Le Souci Formel/The Formal Concern, Chaplet #211, Belladonna, Brooklyn, NY

Disturbances in an Ocean of Air (French/English, translated by the author), Artist Book, concept and lithography, Kate van Houton, Estepa Editions, Paris, France

The Perforated Map, Shearsman Books, Bristol

A Test of Labor, in *Labor Poetic Labor! 2: into the archive*, essaypress.org, Athens, OH

Atmosphered, Oystercatcher Press, Cambridge

Overture, <http://www.metambesen.org/books>, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

On the Nature of Position and Tone, Fields Press, Chicago, IL & New York, NY

Remembrance of Things Plastic, LRL e- editions, San Marcos, TX

In Respect of Distance, Beard of Bees #45, Chicago, IL

Mistakes, Accidents and a Want of Liberty, Barque Press, Cambridge

Disturbances in An Ocean of Air, Phylura Press, Hamden, CT

Suggestions at Every Turn, Seeing Eye Books, Los Angeles, CA

Unknown Land, Kelsey Street Press, Berkeley, CA

Wale, or The Corse, Leave Books, Buffalo, NY

TRANSLATIONS

Body Was by Isabelle Garron, Litmus Press, Brooklyn, NY (forthcoming)

The Ink's Path by Bernard Noël, Cadastre8zero, artwork by François Rouan, Paris

The Rest of the Voyage by Bernard Noël, Graywolf Press, St. Paul, MN

Parting Movement, Constantly Prevented, Isabelle Baladine Howald, Oystercatcher Press

The Pain of Returning, by Isabelle Baladine Howald, Mindmade Books, Los Angeles, CA

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Eléna Rivera

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SAMPLE

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I went out in the woods. Instead
was mentioned, an action
revived. Going into the unknown
with which I am fully familiar
You remember the seeds? ...

John Cage

when you become attuned to your attunement
to scarring, then you're on your way

Fred Moten

WALE;
or
The Corse

SAMPLER

SAMPLER

“Open your lips; don’t open them simply.
I don’t open them simply.”

A book might spill out, desperate, moody
savage, spouting off white characters,
until death do us part. She cannot open her
lips simply because it would be heroism.
The words caught in her throat and the out
pour when and if it came would leave a
pale and turbid wake.

(A toad stuck on scotch tape.)

She drinks water. Open so that she may
enter. She wanted to step into a world
of walruses and whales, but the war stopped
any further plans from forming. She asks you
to take care of the gift of her abandonment.

Alone at her table, lips pressed together,
the writing shuts us out and brings her in.
She asks us to be a dream which cracks open.

I

knots

knew it

came

critiqued

I

starved

in one place

wore the same

thought that

woeful way

lost

SAMPLER

“Whole world seems against me if I could
just explain. Man I love has left me because
I called...”

Dust on the window. Blue light catches
the red of the lamp (turned off). She claims

her ring another time. Woe. Woe. Woe. Woe.
Woe. Woe. Woe. This man interested her

at once. Translating all things to numbers,
the cat waved. He came over after playing

the set and asked, are you in my distance?
Did the man know that the call caused

bombs to drop into another child's backyard?
He took delight in departure.

driven

smoke moved

crated

different

grew in many

an ignorant whim

to please

SAMPLER

She gives deeper joy, consumes more swiftly.

She eats as though she was starving. Hair in place. Her mother associated all that was ugly with what was hateful. She hated her stomach (which “She” do you mean?). She sat in the corner where we put her, facing a wall. Your friendship was her sorrow. Pain went both ways. The stolen, stolen was the measure of grief. Her house was bombed in half. Had to run. Had to run. Had to run. In half a person cannot be. Not fully be. No fill. She asked if she could eat more. (Again which “She” do you mean? Make yourself clear.) She said yes—sausages, eggs, toast. Disgust. The Rise was reflected in all these eyes that stared. Took sides for survival. The glass is empty and being filled was never understood. SATIATED. The woman dressed in tattoos said that word, said there was nothing like it. She held the girl in her arms. You can’t white that out.

a whole

occupied

I watched

a travesty

trea

ted

SAMPLER

To be furious is to be frightened out
of fear.

How many more until we begin
mourning? She bleeds into her Thai food,
into.... Her breasts swell slightly.

They were associated by color; a paper
clip holds them together. The air weighs,
weighs heavily, and whether it is reality
or not, she can never entirely settle.

We insisted on a gate. How could she?
Leaves were pressed in a thick book, and
later she drew them with children.

The sun shines in at the window and
women were open (soft skin easily bruises).
How much longer will her father continue
to shake her? She can't listen to doors
slam. Slam!

The bar was crowded, cramped. People in
leather jackets. The man never returned the
ring the woman lost (though they laid down,
laid down—not standing, as to kill time—
and he hurt her). Fortunately pain lasts only
a short time and Civilization is what was best
and most suitable for all.

out

side

pressed

worry molded

pain

I

late

lament

SAMPLER

“Her cry silences whole vocabularies of names for things.”

There is no access when the destruction is so great. Only leisure will bring you towards the knowledge of who you are. The shade is half open, just enough to brighten the room so as to not need a lamp. Craving will manifest itself in arranging and rearranging (enters ghost). You did this to your children. She does this to her compositions. Will you be her audience if she promises to be soft enough, smell good enough, curve her body into yours enough? The woman “sold her soul” for attention (she must resign her life into the hands of he who steers the boat). A mouse is ineffective, especially when still. Strum your guitar and you’ll hear in it an echo (with hands that steer). Perhaps, she wets her hair so that it will bounce back.

tape

book

letter

candle

wail

pen

log

saliva

sheet

radio

knife

SAMPLER

The woods chopped down describe
seduction to the lonely.

The audience which we are becomes
that leaf and then falls into waterfalls
(or something else) flakes off down
the highway.

A pregnant lesson in solemn tones.
The continual tolling of a bell in a ship
that is foundering at sea in a fog.

She is still (still, still, still)
and puts herself into seclusion.