

The Invention of Culture

Other works by Lisa Samuels include:

LETTERS (Meow Press 1996)

The Seven Voices (O Books 1998)

War Holdings (Pavement Saw Press 2003)

Paradise for Everyone (Shearsman Books 2005)

Increment (a family romance) (Bronze Skull Press 2006)

Lisa Samuels

The Invention of Culture

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for Mark and Rowan

That we are permanent temporarily, it is warm to know,
though we know no more.

Emily Dickinson

OCCIDENT

I took a walk and fell into blindness as
the grass bright hitting
I walked and was forsaken by avenues

(underneath location was 'a chance to guess')

Walking I was surrounded by hysteria the forms
of dogs and flowers in archetypal
would-be heat, women across their wishes

I fell to an imagined countenance
assuaging their comportment
the garden gestures partial with bells
and heavy tresses

I will without omniscience having
never meant to mean the bells are flying
east to west, into straight lines pitch and drill

hollow out your back with greengrass, hallowtree
forsaking hysterical luxury made plain)

by walking's bellows
delicate around your arms ideas of dogs
drawn see-through so the walk's achieved
as pennants for those dogs, bright fluttering

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Maybe permanence is something you're born with
a soft arbitration of children with their open mouths
the sun slant at the parlor and women milling forcefully
arrange each licit article upon the tongue
in profile, as to say lemon
arbitrary
sweet
against the nostril
a little tang of wishing in the strawberry

Just like when you strayed too far
from your 'felt sense of purpose'
some names attached to the story to give it flesh
a passel of ideas shaped like persons: they were
wattled, habitual in covert languages
held together shimmying like property
two fine bones, two fine hands
the little wrenches in between
inscrutable barometers in a weather

Perplexed inflexibility as 'not her fault at all'
and anyway like the bird who rushed down the chimney
covered with its death
parting the hair like trees

EVERYONE AGREES AND YOU HAVE CULTURE

The elect, morphemically engrossed
is beautiful, his haunch par terre
like the horsey appended to a carousel
whose figures of motion self-deceive.

'Safari,' he's telling me about it, one exquisite
fortitude after another. We purr on land
in grasses, on highways made of carpet
the pinks of funerary curiosity

Not that economy isn't the central basis of
blood terror, but the woman in the cake
knew how to get out of there fast
(he did it, he stayed right there in his doubt!)

They all smiled enormously their boundaries
lightened. After that, one might hope to *be thinking*.
Hyperions of crème brûlée, cities
one would heretofore have no reason to spell.

DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

the logic of my nature
is triumvirate
circumscribed by anxious latitudes

not alone in this
unburied longing
perhaps the fee can be arranged

*flecked underneath
like jade pilings
planted in water, infiltrate*

the fruits of my orchard are wanting
the clasp of impairment
rendered silent

heaving through clarity
like a ladylike sigh
inveterate fortune
falls triumphant

*I have struck oil
I have struck land
I have struck your face
with the back of my hand*

anything you see that I want
anyone you know that I have
fortunate and unvariable
chalked on the listening board

the building rumbles
in the floor of my chest
you, knowing something
halt by the wall

descending to a non-escape
the fire begins at the top of the air
and sweeps incredibly down

POLITICAL POEM

the vocabulary one could say in subst
ituting itself as moronically sashes
a body's rhythms give it density

painting always had its idea
a pose in the process of dissolving but
the flicker book merely replete
says the luminous in calling such

things inimical to beacon
the standard three-by-four happens
on an edge

having created a single autonomy
between passable images of magic
forth over and over two locations
inside one inter
locutor compositing no longer as
theatrical backdrop but
phantom lapse, accommodation fantasies.

we observe they occupy
two places at once and I
never did see or fetch a re prehensive finally

what I mean is detached
kindly, floating in
mention, no particular
space in mind

CIVITAS

No, don't get that – back from it, we are
too apparent each, all commas and elucting
what nature gave us, 'ick' – forestall whatever
it is you: and never mind the 'we are climbing out'
when you abide or that!, inscrutable timetable
up dearly, how it plains us for a game: one go
and you are always monument, a saken
optimist flying saturate via some
air or error-striven behemoth
hitting the cloud-belt with a prrup!,
so that we're shook and unbesaddled
with a bell or supine entity that makes
us addle-stocked and mildly whipped –

FIRE SKIN WITH THE CELL-PHONE EXECUTION ON

You whose rates are finer than dynamite you whose rants
are closer than my heart you who dropped 5,000 tons
of destructive material from your head and you

I cannot reach – I cannot try up pry – I fearly, wanton calibration
of no earth, no riot-chore strung round your arms
no lights up stock-tick lyric-blasters you

soft and weakened state, the lines around your balance show
I have you now, your soft negated strafe worn on

the earth is calm, it folds and wriggles it has given me the yes
and I am holding it withal, the yes and I havoc the strands

yes I habiting, the whole relentless particle you said
the wind has saned for who the strands done softly she

so awful touching under smiles earth has given
navigant to fine pushed-out whole calendar sweat

and shoed the bidding struck with numerable arms
soft tense hold biotic brace and you me so so words with touch

and are so let to be the hands you gently
world in habits own and this the uppermost

the pensive fair that blanch gone linger,
monger hands see say they listen hear

that they cannot want for power
that they cannot reap and proffer to you power that
they are tense and mobile in
 your arms back sense of time
 sheets winding around your eyes

the arms have you the rope has you
over your head your neck and soft
wrinkled against the obfuscate surroundings and
what comes next and they are calling the sounds
accumulate and you are not sure exactly when