

OZARKS



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for Marthe Reed

Transitional to hyperobjective reality, places serve as loci of human connection to the complex ground of our being, capable of affording access to that ‘somewhere inbetween’ self and other, near and distant, paradoxical poles resolving moment-to-moment into contiguity. *Meeting place*. In these more local, immediate contexts, experiences of interconnection—beneficial, destructive, neutral—manifest and can be grappled with in concert with knowledge of large-scale phenomenon, each informing the other.

—Marthe Reed

from the French *aux arcs* ♦ of the arches, trading
posts ♦ the curves of a snake ♦ toponym
with roads cut through ♦ trails of tears ♦
springs, losing streams ♦ sinkholes, waterfalls
♦ stones are bored through by blue-green water
♦ diesel fumes

chickens pitched in long houses ♦ white in the
gills ♦ red eyed, peppery ♦ the firm grin of
moonshine ♦ azaleas, peach groves ♦ some
caves ♦ etched mildew ♦ dust lodged in the
threshold ♦ the *entre space*

the between space, a “somewhere inbetween” ♦
agora, or “meeting place” ♦ *where adventure waits*
♦ rife with Karst topography ♦ dolostone or
limestone bedrock ♦ drained by the Black,
Buffalo, Gasconade, Meramec & White rivers ♦
“fast-food wrappings greasy with fat” ♦ at dusk,
beside the egrets & herons ♦ elk browse Boxley
Valley, the pastures, past photographers

square dances around the mills ♦ hearths of the
Osage, Caddo & Quapaw ♦ footprints of
nightriders ♦ mountains at rest are prone to rest
♦ this is inertia ♦ where the red fern grows ♦
scored bones & hay swatches ♦ plastic bags
under the nails ♦ the groaning of white smoke,
trash pits & camp fires

fracking-laced clothes ♦ sun-stained smocks ♦
CAFO discharges ♦ of the land peopled for
Christ ♦ with rose petal mouths ♦ barns
nailed with crosses ♦ the shape of life to come
♦ old pennies & iron pots ♦ wild pecans beside
the libraries

the glitter of decorative gourds ♦ brushed
aluminum plates ♦ road signs point to
Americana, kitsch ♦ “somewhere inbetween”
coasts, time zones ♦ frontiers ♦ teeth &
rocks aimed at kids heads ♦ knotted ropes ♦
ghosts prepositional to poplar trees ♦ “What it
means to be here | now”

little yellow coneflowers in the streets ♦ lottery
tickets sold beside pork rinds ♦ packets of Sweet
'n Low ♦ fog pinched between soft green
hummocks ♦ detergents & plutonium from
Fukushima, Chernobyl, Alamogordo ♦ mercury
bathtubs ♦ bones into ornaments ♦ cotton
bolts folded like sheaths ♦ the art of houses

collared lizards & feral pigs ♦ segmented
armadillos & swift-footed roadrunners ♦
endangered Hellbenders & extinct woodpeckers ♦
tarantulas molting in garages ♦ scorpions in
floorboards ♦ dragon tongues in the sun ♦
okra & tomatoes, hot & dusty in gardens ♦
pokeweed, watercress, persimmons, pawpaw ♦
bee balm, wild crocus, royal catchfly, butterfly weed

the *entre space* ♦ “meeting place” of poets ♦
moonlit battlefields, lost roads, ellipses ♦
sparkling, unbreakable flares ♦ *where adventure*
waits ♦ like *E. coli* & *Salmonella* & cyanobacteria
blooms ♦ blue pickups & blue hearts ♦ thighs
drawn across the dark ♦ magical pregnancies ♦

place names preserve theft, like salt ♦
rheumatism lined with buckshot ♦ stairs down
to the bats ♦ “in the midst” of “enmeshed
networks” ♦ inertia ♦ reverb, or “somewhere
inbetween” ♦ a bridge to cross ♦ in some
kind of state ♦ at the end of the world

Note

All quotations are from Marthe Reed's essay "‘somewhere inbetween’; Speaking-Through Contiguity," the afterword to *Counter Desecration: A Glossary for Writing within the Anthropocene* edited by Linda Russo and Marthe Reed (Wesleyan, 2018).

C.S. Carrier earned an MFA from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a PhD from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He is the recipient of the 2018 Omnidawn Broadside Poetry Prize and the author of *Mantle* (2013) and *After Dayton* (2008). He grew up in western North Carolina and lives in northwestern Arkansas.

