

Tielli/Wittmann Residency

Somewhere There

January 2010

Notes from a.rawlings

The following notes respond to the two performances I attended at Somewhere There for Doug Tielli and Claudia Wittmann's residency. They are divided into three sections: "During," "After," and "Reading Recommendation." The "During" notes are drafts written while the performance took place, composed less as a response to what I witnessed, and more as an improvisation triggered by the performance. The first "During" draft was composed with the characters "she," "one woman," and "men," as these are the primary characters in a novel I'm currently writing. In the "After" section, I respond to what stayed with me post-event; the January 14th "After" resonates strongest with me of all the offered texts here. "Reading Recommendation" names the text whose sentences I couldn't get out of my head after having attended the event.

January 7: During

Starved herself. Fed herself. Night starved herself to hear the voices clearly. She wore skates and tore at one's womb. Her strongfrail embryotic form cut. Bones and night, the stolen bones, bones stolen and restless. Kind. What did her body need but sound?

She pushed and gripped at and pushed her aura away and filled that void with sound. The bodies of men and then she didn't move at all.

Fed and starved night and what the body guilts over and and then there there. One's one woman so much act and activity felt but unnoticed. How can she know?

One woman pregnant in hérna but she was birthed long before.

The aura stretched and pulled apart and pulled and filled this felt and unfathomed please. Eat, eat, eat, eat. Fracture. Bonelessness. Feral. Branch. Beach. Night. Starved and fed night. Forged or forgotten, night.

She had, hérna, guilt-what. Ghosts in the percussion. Anaphylactic men and friends.

Release drop narrative. Release drop fiction. Try not to move so much.

One woman wants to be men. She was men.

January 7: After

Slow and still bodies in constellated space. Cleansing of aura, right hand circling over head and wicking away: tonification. The push-pull magnetism of bodies in relation. And a word push-pulled as matter: "guilt." Tremble or tremor, language as tumour.

Something about father. Other. Closer and farther the feedback.

Dim fractured light, halo, her body. Kirlianograph.

January 7: Reading Recommendation

bpNichol's *Journal* (Coach House Press, 1978)

January 14: After

Claudia sits in a chair facing me, facing us. She is fifteen feet away from us, from me. Claudia reclines, torso slumped, legs splayed, feet planted. Claudia sits in a chair facing me, facing us, for ten minutes. She appears large though impassive, her eyes and facial muscles the only subtle movement. Her aura sings. My eyes focus on her and light auras around her, making Claudia shimmer. Claudia looks at Simla Civelek, then Scott Thomson, then me, then Lo Bil, then Doug Tielli.

Claudia sits in a chair facing me, facing us, facing each person in turn, holding eye contact with ease. I assume this ease. When Claudia looks at me, I look at her. When Claudia does not look at me, I look at her. I want her to look at me but I also want her to look away. I am quiet but then I am loud, muddled, wanting. Claudia and I look at each other. My face mirrors hers or is it the other way around. I am calm but busy. My forehead and chin twitch. My head cocks to the right. My lips play a soft upturned amusement. Worry lines lift into my forehead. I notice my own protracted improvisation of bodily shift. I notice my breathing. I notice that I notice.

Claudia's face plays and lines. Her eye contact steadies and studies; so does mine. Our eyes contact. I look at her and I wonder what I see. As she looks at me, I wonder how she sees me. What judgments do we make about this projected flesh and perhaps we did not choose flesh but what we have we've moulded with care and difficulty for thirty or forty years. What judgments do I make about her flesh or my own. What judgments on interior, exterior. Is this dance. How is this dance. What is it to dance. With my presence in Claudia's presence, questions raise though punctuation enacts fact.

Claudia stands and walks to a different chair. Then a different chair. Claudia lays on the floor. She walks with Lo; they discuss history and weight. Scott leaves the room; then Doug leaves the room. Women fiddle with the possibility to share an experience, to conspire. Unspoken urges manifest in movement. Some unmoved urges manifest in speech. What she said. What she said hangs on my lips, unspoken.

She is here and then there. She is on her knees, upright, exploring space. She explores her interior space externally. We have come here to witness. They have come here for their own reasons. I came to be close, to be in this moment with Claudia and with Doug, to learn how they navigate their subtle bodies in a public sphere, to be where bodies are bodies, to be where sound can be heard. I came to learn from their honest moments. I came to learn from my own.

To sit in a chair and to witness is a choice. To sit and witness is to assume a position in relation to another, to assume a role. And then, all of a sudden, sprung from all the preparation that lead to this moment, it happens: this moment. I find myself here in this room in relation to the giving receiving bodies of other people who are here, in this room. We all take care.

January 14: During

Wet dry seasons with water without the tepid notation of northern latitudes, their squirrely marks pigeoned or impassioned false-step footsteps embarked on paths lined with sweet birch, silver birch, cedar, sweetgrass, sage, devil's paintbrush, drunks, ducks, scattered milkweed shells, whole beaded footsteps of missionaries and circus performers and oldtimers and ragtimers and raggamuffins and Raggedy Andy and puffins and swaddled babies who aren't actually walking or crawling but are dragged by their swaddling through sluice, slurry, mud, grit, dried pebbled creeks and babies' eyes bloodshot and red-rimmed from neglect and crying, such release of liquid from tear ducts and nostrils and mouths that are slathered with mucous, saliva, paste, foam, and small sweaty armpits and butcracks and the teething with its pain – such a wonder there is ever a wet season at all, that there is now only dry season or at the very least a wet-dry season witnessed by the regal forms of witches in the forms of trees of birches in the forms of birds of bards in the forms of babies of teeth in the forms of teeth that have yet to burst free of gums, teeth that have yet to fall to a path to become stones and wear down to pebbles and break down further to sand, a sand caked with mud, the blackest sand and the greyest mud and all the rotting that pours from the aforementioned forms.

This could have been nicer.

Oh shut the fuck up. Don't move; just be pretty for a spell.

January 14: Reading Recommendation

Juliana Spahr's "Switching" (from *Fuck You, Aloha, I Love You*)