

PAPER FACTORY

KLAIRE JOHNSTON

paper factory

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For Jaclyn -
in admiration of your amazing strength.
I love you.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This selection of previously unpublished poetry will introduce you to my style of story-telling.

If you enjoy it, please seek out my other works, which are available both as e-books and paperbacks.

- Klaire

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For those who continue to encourage me to send my ideas out into the world - you make these words possible.

Formatting is best maintained in minimum e-reader font.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Klaire Johnston's authentic writing reveals the fine line between the everyday and the extraordinary, with a sharp observation that illuminates the human condition.

She believes the power of words is universal.

Klaire lives and works in stunning Alpine Victoria, though she's traversed just enough of the globe to realise wanderlust is an incurable disease.

Perhaps you'll meet her trekking in the Canadian Rockies, enjoying a White Christmas in Rovaniemi or dining on sashimi in Japan.

> pulp <
starch
ash

we fell

fell from great heights
fell deeper
fell on swords

then all to pieces

.....

pulp
> starch <
ash

let's meet saturday you say

saturday

i roll it over my tongue like a
foreign dialect

saturday,

by the river

it will be raining then

i recall our conversations
about the weight of water on
various planes

we'll still see stars you tell me
and i conjure the hint of a smile

neither of us remembers well
how to smile

what should I bring? i ask

what you usually bring...

the smile
becomes definite when
i suggest the suitcase under my bed
should be just the right size
to fit all those imaginings

.....

tonight i dream in
enigma c o d e

each letter shifting
indecipherably
across your face

.....

as we sit shoulder to shoulder
the world rights itself
just a little

your words are autumn's umbrage
unconstrained by pages
and i no more want to hold you
than the bird that visits my garden

.....

in the wash of dawn
i consider you are
something like pain

but then
the rest of life's agonies
 fade
when held against you

.....

i am the paper factory
and you
the molotov cocktail

.....

less of you
finds me more consumed

holding everything i can offer, here
in cupped hands
the logic is leaking through
and i'm up against clocks

still, i scribble my way
to the fringe of your consciousness

hoping the ink will be
indelible

.....

you might be the edge of
 wilderness
and i, well
i've never been the
 outdoor type

are you happy? you ask of me
and i, well
i refuse to rise
to the challenge

still we wrestle as would
lovers
of letters discovered under old floorboards
of half-finished journals in attics
of blooms that perennially try to
 kiss a cheek
before fluttering to the ground

.....

next town, next county
gentle relief

the screws only tighten when you
are around the very
next corner

or as your back disappears
into a doorway and
i'm reduced to

the concert you left early
the movie you walked out of
the book with the unappealing dust jacket

all wrapped in a breathless second

.....

scratches scar the table
tease flattened palms

you know this talk -
the one with the
wild ending

mascara dripping
smashed whiskey glasses
venomous words to harrow the neighbours

.....

you've become a certain
kind of stranger

the face in the following aisle
where your name skips
just a few beats astern

where i seem to remember
a feeling not quite formed
as your tail lights recede
into the liquid night

.....

i'm buried now
 below reams, beneath sheets,
 behind coal,
a little blood to mix with soil
a shallow breath resting

i hear a knock and when nobody enters
i know
that i've been beaten only by
 time itself

.....

pulp
starch
> ash <

early evening
you shed a layer of skin
 the one just hidden by ink
and into the alcoves of your apartment let fall
a darkness broken only by
 flickering screens
and the glow of a streetlight
creeping under the shades

you think of her
 the being you haven't met yet
who, on a night just like this, will inch
into your realm
 a message
 at a time
filling your too-tired brain with
heady lines you'll read between

words will be enough to keep you high
until she breaks through the black -
 drenched in starlight
 tasting like nothing else
and completely unaware you have already
begun to weave her into a lifetime of memories

.....

today i swim in the city
with its imposing angles and
steep suggestions

i trace lines while
suburban enclaves claw at
red-brick edges

somewhere
the notes of an untuned piano
dip and sway

and too soon follows the regret that
i've chosen here
to curl up and oppose the storm

beyond the bend creeps a thought
with cedar walls
and a memory-foam mattress that recognises
someone other than you

.....

Thank you for reading

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- Klaire

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