



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This selection of previously unpublished poetry will introduce you to my style of story-telling.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

fade

.....

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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