

ALLISON HUTCHCRAFT

Lampshade Cue Stick Acrobat Dust

Proximity—a Gestalt principle of organization holding that (other things being equal) objects or events that are near to one another (in space or time) are perceived as belonging together as a unit.

—The SAGE Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences

Rain in the gutters, rain in the sea. A man stands at an intersection,
his red umbrella broken by wind,
and everything seems temporarily permanent, a color
of moment and weather.

There's hope maybe in this,
or in watching plump orange koi
swimming at local Japanese gardens. I watch their slow, hibernating
circles, as if x equals x ,

as if from a certain distance lily pads are also stones
and a child leaning toward the water's edge,
searching for frogs,
is a strand of cattail bent to the tilt of its lean.

I can go a relatively short distance
and find other versioned localities—
grocery checkout line, jicama and sprouts,
or the fox-glow of an afternoon, its near privacy opening,

expanding into June.
Once while looking out a train window,
I saw a woman standing in a grassy lot. The train had stalled,
another stop, small towns in Illinois,

and she was combing her hair—
there, where her back turned at an angle toward the tracks,
where the curve of her hair met the curve
of her arm lifting,

and the wing of the comb
summered at the tip of dusk. What do I think when I feel it?
When something's very near, when glass breaks in the sink
or on the floor—

maybe that's the crux of it, resurfaced again, an old table.

Maybe that's proximity, released.

These lights I turn off at night, in the morning they're all turned on.

I've forgotten all my bravery.