

Poems

Kate Hargreaves

Arc

1.

Arc under her skirts after lunch
shouldn't have bread cheese soup
in the office bathroom mirror untucks her blouse, zips down the skirtside zip half way
checks for stall feet, checks the door and sneaks up on the arc peach and
two red lines indent from
the belt of her beige skirt
shouldn't have/eaten breakfast milk oats bran sip of grapefruit
breathes into ribs/breasts/shoulders and pulls the arc closer to her back
belly button pulls back, stretches tall from round to slit
Elle stands sideways hips jut in front, tummy arc bread and butter tied back with one
breath
holding blouse bra-high with one hand, skirt up with the other
strain tight on her mouth, coughs
won't eat dinner

2.

Elle unties the cord on her robe
yesterday she finished reading a novel that called it a housecoat
robe, yes, but something about housecoat
less regal, explains the bite marks and loose threads from where she gnawed the corner
the ends of the cords

3.

Elle unties her housecoat, slips her arms out and feels the rush of cold air across her
belly
leaves the coat dangling from the hood, slipping down off the back of her head
sliding down over snips of hair that stick up in the back. Elle needs a shower.
stands naked in front of the full-length mirror with its pine edges
waist nipping in slightly under the ribs

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small arc, belly button round

presses heels of both hands down under rib lines and slides them over the round bit

forcing the flesh inner and tauter and downer

a rumble inside a slosh lets go and again the arc

sideways won't concave in down through

profile: firm shoulder, small slope of breast hip hip and in the middle the blocking arc

Elle presses again squeezing air up or down just out out

but the arc rounds

4.

Elle

naked

like the past tense

was naked not is

Elle was naked

Who naked Elle?

Elle nakes

Elles nake

Elle naking

5.

damp in the bedroom Elle slips the warm towel off her head

black hair fuzzy and knotty

pulls up brown silk pajama bottoms legs sticking in small dark patches

shirtless in the mirror clasps both hands over tummy button

scowls and presses

the arc rumbles

sloshes with coffee

Elle picks up her houserobe wraps up sharp chest bones and soft tummy wet hair under

a terrycloth hood

Skim

She skims.

She skims the floating fat off his mother's minestrone soup.

She saves it in a Ziploc bag in the freezer.

She skims flat rocks across the sodden backyard.

They skip once and sink into the mud.

She skims the grass seed out of the water with a pool net.

She skims her milk. Sometimes she one percents.

She skims a little bit off the top at the office.

She scans.

She scans the ceiling for hidden cameras.

She skins her elbow on the brick wall.

She picks off the scab and tucks it into her purse.

She purses her lips.

She paints them pink.

She sinks. She misses.

She sinks her face into her towel.

She collects stray hairs from the bathroom sink.

She scrimps by the skin of her teeth.

She teethes.

She sinks her teeth into a stale bread roll.

She stinks of garlic and sweat.

She stings.

She scrapes the stinger from her foot.

She limps over to the sink.

She steeps a pot of tea.

She scans the bottom shelf of the fridge:

out of skim.

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Splinter

Windsor splints me. Splints shins—feet bat-battering asphalt cracks thud thud thwack thwack thwack thwack shoelace plastic tip clipping concrete. thfooooo—exhale fast against damp armpit air. Pause one foot on pavement, other shoe rolling over ants and grass and woodchips two feet from dog shit sizzle in the haze. thhoooo—exhale re-tie loop over around and through, tie the ears together and tap toe towards sneaker end. Stand. Sweat slips between vertebrae, over spine juts like waterfall rocks—slish slide slim. On feet and level with horse heads over sparse hedge over-pruned by ninety-five degree weeks and days, nights of dry roots, brown branches, crisp. Rind warming in racer-back lines, heat-dying Friday afternoon onto shoulders arms and calves. Out and back: laterals around perambulator pushers and camera couples pausing to snap the elephant and her babies. thfoooooo—thfooooooo—hard breaths in time with *glitter on the wet streets* calves and quads suck blood and O2 from head spinning and concrete clumps cling to clay soles. Windsor sticks to my sneakers, sod, cement, gum, cast iron eggs and birds catch on my laces. thfooooooo—exhale, and scuff rubber on road, to scrape off stones, cedar chips, Tim Horton's cups and spare change. Shin splints. Cable-knit air chokes my out-breath. thf—bronze base casts over my shoes. Drags me toward river railings and drills toes into sod. Headphones pumping *dance dance dance til your dead* at path-side. Playlist over. Riverside runner: artist unknown. Bronze, textile and sports tape. Splint into the soil.

Kate Hargreaves is a book designer, writer, and roller derby skater living in Windsor, Ontario. She has published poetry in numerous magazines around Canada, as well as working as a poetry editor for *The Windsor Review*. Her first book, *Talking Derby*, was released by Black Moss Press in 2013, and her first poetry collection will be released by Book Thug in 2014.