

# Renee Gladman

## WATER, EVENLY

refusal  
yours  
these many days  
as many as  
bridges  
of our world  
I've seen you  
on the main  
your jars  
in tow  
but the name  
we agreed  
would equal  
your form  
does not  
these lips  
evenly

\*

I send out word  
street keepers come  
to assist me  
I make the sound I  
think is yours  
everyone comes  
we look at my mouth  
I emit  
all parties grasp  
its contents  
we look at the sky  
then once more  
that sound  
from my mouth

\*

you don't hear  
the sound I make

Is that right—

and don't see  
that I went  
to make it

\*

spotted places  
beautifully  
the damp ground  
part that is damp  
limbs that open  
winter death—  
even where there's  
no longer winter;  
the air grows cold  
empty as it is

you are in this scene  
which is not  
your scene

\*

the street-keepers  
withstood  
the spraying  
of the word  
    *vastly*  
condescended  
to clear it   nearby  
windows

and saw

KEY  
LINE  
PAGE



\*

clouds come  
and cause a slanting  
of the light  
now bent over  
this bed; I see the part  
not attached  
to the chest  
close my eyes  
to adhere  
to the picture  
are you adhering

\*

cloud interrupts  
the vacancy; to  
stand in the mist  
as had previously  
the clearing  
this figure in the  
midst; to merge  
with it  
becoming  
unclear  
but clearer  
in that  
it is  
what  
you're doing

\*

had there never  
been a form  
swelling  
around this one  
that broke night  
with its weight  
and had that form  
refused me—  
before I reached  
the clearing—  
V would still—

I wanted to get  
beyond porch  
night

\*

you, the unclear  
I follow  
become mist  
above water  
hold a body  
in water  
and lose a body  
in the mist—  
transference  
not met—  
to become one  
and one  
floating

\*

surface  
of water  
against the vertical  
figure of my  
counter-  
part  
across  
the intent of her  
left behind  
    as "hold this"  
so that  
the vertical  
remains  
evenly

\*

this body  
struggle to stay  
on water  
as a skin  
as excelling  
to swim, to float

like that body  
counter-swimmer  
of most, whose  
borders lay  
elsewhere  
I am still  
this water

\*

wading to emptiness  
the shore  
crowded beach  
and empty  
placeholders wet  
with you  
and empty mouths  
cry out  
warning  
against approach  
you  
the farthest  
most remote  
part, here

\*

where there isn't  
the pool  
the dry  
bed  
of its  
neglect,  
not death,  
a refusal-  
death until  
the dream, which is  
thus-death  
leaves you  
alone  
yet full  
of afterthought,  
sand,  
scum

\*

even still  
and without  
progress I run  
along waves of gray  
southward  
following  
the light  
smelling you  
counter-  
swimmer  
moving farther out  
running

where the sand  
ends I stop

\*

water, the  
threshold:  
names that  
do not know  
other names  
float despite  
the discrepancy  
move off  
downstream

far away  
one notes  
their approach;  
adds 'the names  
moving toward  
me'  
as to sign  
the document  
but drops  
the paper in water  
to dissolve  
everything

the loss  
weakens

the newest name  
the infant  
swimmer

you are losing  
the infant  
swimmer

the infant swimmer  
drops below  
paper

counter to  
the other's  
course

\*

I watch  
the paper  
sinking                    take on water  
    acquire a name  
in my watching  
and run  
to meet  
her, the counter-  
swimmer  
asking  
could you write  
the name  
here  
then back away  
from water  
    when the beach  
clears I  
read what  
the swimmer  
wrote

\*

the sunken paper  
said more



and can I get  
the swimmer  
to bring it  
to me, risking  
death of water  
for not  
sinking myself  
I can't yell the expanse  
the paper  
sinking  
farther  
swimmer in her  
breaststroke

\*

she returns  
after silence went  
the counter-  
swimmer

rising with grace  
into broken  
silences  
she moves  
toward me  
the re-populated  
shore  
we meet           it happens  
but there's no one  
to whom  
I can  
convey  
the report  
so instantly  
it empties

\*

and thought out  
the shape of V  
across the surface  
called it  
many names  
until the place

of conference  
mid-V, center  
V aligned  
my course  
and tried to  
speak of it  
to the shore  
as I made  
to float

but couldn't float

the counter-  
swimmer  
grabbed me  
as I took on  
water  
but refused  
to say  
anything

it was  
another voice  
that cleared  
the shore