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Laura Goldstein

grid

healing parallel #1: birds and snow
we make a little nest of flakes that
becomes the next life and then
a wave of air. i might have mixed up
a memory with a strong feeling
in the present- i merely chose to remind
myself. i don't become attached
in need of rest

also in need of energy. a certain
kind of rest and a certain kind
of energy. what are the other words?
you can spread them out on a grid
whose vertices light up momentarily
with meaning. i can't remember
the rest- i have to be reminded or become
addicted to the naturally tactile. every day
and night every day and night

the grid of night as parallel to that
of day each bird a black spot on

the page works to further its meaning
by just being. stop thinking, my
teacher said. so i saw a reflection
of last night in the snow but didn't
realize until the day was finished
a shape that landed in my hair and
stayed, since it was cold enough. an
imprint made with air. our bodies
against a common surface we observe
with pleasure. is reflected light more

healing because we appreciate
the abstraction or is it the eye's more
tactile involvement? what do you
mean by participation, he asked
i don't know, i said, it could be
the opposite of addiction.

i keep observing myself nothing happens
but that's not true. in explanation to a friend
on the phone it all sounds good this is
common i observe it. yesterday a long
walk along a spiral of snow a low sun
followed. i kept turning to see where it was
because it was allowing me to see. what rules.
i'm watching what's warm to see what changes
the high contrast against the cold
snow in stasis, no birds, no sun, but day
is what i'm describing now. at night i looked out
at what was there, trees exploded grids
of branches artificial orange light right outside
there is no parallel to the present that adds up
to addiction, only the tactile reality of time.

what numbers tell us, i said to them is that
sometimes we have to look harder for
patterns. how slow a great change actually
takes, he responded. would you like to try
this experiment? i asked them. it's almost
the end of the day. they didn't respond
according to the book i'm reading about
language, that means they perceive me
as dangerous. as soon as it's night i think
"i need to rest". don't spend too much time
thinking, i told them. i've heard that before
is this the right way to be teaching? i am this

small space. we're all silent
between night and day, all
on a grid. as if i really miss you, but that
can't be true. but as someone entirely new
i can say that when you gave me these words
i was happy and i'm happier now that i've used them.

the days are actually changing me. i wonder
at this pattern. i thought about it as she was
touching me, rubbing the blood out of my lungs
on the phone i told her about how words
when in a certain pattern touch me
in a certain way. she said yeah. as the night
comes on the snow turns black. you don't know
me you don't know me at all i say to myself
as a person i am a grid of myself
any pattern i create is to show you that grid
it exists because of time. can you tell that i am going
away soon can you tell that i care
i'm trying to remember the words
as if they were parallel to my thinking
new plan: winter weather is an ether
of remembered pleasures. lungs rough
up into a grid of addiction, parallel to
an earlier era. that's not true i then
tell myself. when the birds disappear
under the snow at night i wait for the day
and its perpetual light. this is not
healing. dependent on memories months
before. she walked in the door offered
me a small cookie dipped in dark
chocolate from a small paper bag started
singing. when the heat switches off i can still
hear her behind the closed door of her room
change happens under the snow this is something
we know and think about all the way up to
and through the spring

healing parallel #2: an era of addiction
the snow, even somehow an addition
at night my teacher gave me
an image then we all moved
with palpable possibility birds probably
feel that way along with the unmarked fear
winter's warmth is an end when i can't think

of anything marked out onto a grid that i use
as a representation of myself it's not
that i'm tired it's something else it's deep
appreciation of the tactile that requires attention
from a direction i'm accustomed to drawing upon
as addiction now that space is ready
 to be filled with light

there's no addiction to silence a parallel to a guess
a guess i ordered an extra word saw the whole day
and the next day as a grid of light and invisibility
where are you i asked everyone I had just finished
reading and it felt tactile my lungs responded what
happens at night a dirt bird didn't make it under a
pile of short phrases I commented on like “elaborate”
melting snow is still snow “it's slippery” i said
as i slipped you know that story about looking back
because it's impossible calm down some healing
can happen in cloud's pink shadow desired effect
of a list static and still every word that stays
the waves are clear today, rolling the light
in large parallels. there is no pattern
a bird is a grid that has flown. no other
addictions have grown it's healing
singing is sometimes better for language
they told me so why can't we sing
all the time? the snow in little circles
on each wave the lungs wake up a bit
look back to the page where the list is
it's tactile. this is not the night
 to wonder
how i'll feel on other nights. it's true

Laura Goldstein's first collection of poetry, *loaded arc*, was released by Trembling Pillow Press in 2013 and her second collection, *awesome camera*, was published by Make Now Press in 2014. She has also published six chapbooks as well as numerous poems and essays in magazines in print and online. She currently teaches at Loyola University and co-curates the Red Rover Reading Series.