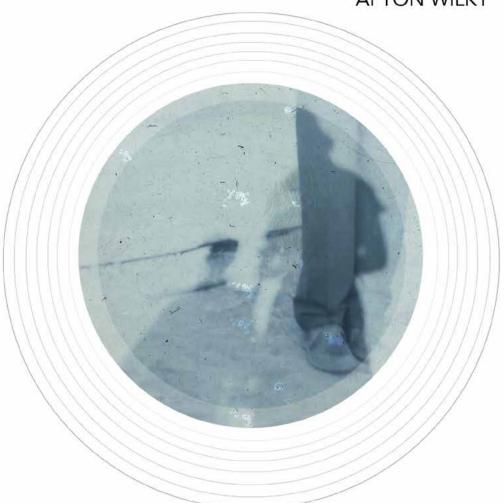
Acquisition: an index

AFTON WILKY







ACQUISITION: AN INDEX

AFTON WILKY

ESSAY PRESS EP SERIES



#44

ESSAY PRESS EP SERIES

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INTRODUCTION

cquisition: an index is an excerpt from a Hook-length essay, Reservoir, which tells the story of Arthur Lee and Lillian Mae Gibson, two people displaced by the building and arbitration of Milford Lake in Kansas (the largest man-made body of water in the state). A cross between lyricessay and micro-history, Reservoir embodies the rubble of this forgotten past through analogous textual structures, such as footnotes containing salient literary quotations, lists of debris in the area and short lyric collages made from a cut-up version of the manuscript. Piecing narrative together from newspaper articles, an archaeological report and a box of documents belonging to Arthur and Lillian Gibson, Reservoir traces parallels between physical, textual and grammatical sites of accrual: box, house, reservoir, archive, history, literature, person, pronoun and footnote. Seeking a means of writing that will also undergo the slippage it describes, Reservoir finds that in language, fractured at the level of sentences, paragraphs and/or page, which is fragile enough to approach an account of loss. Beginning with the arrival of a box of documents, Acquisition: an index examines the process of taking possession in both an archival and more general sense.



endless proximity Rendered. through sheets of paper, one might wish transfer. holding those holding continued again. times moment, as row River light finding flatness abstracted. patterned rubble opening events Objects having-been otherwise synapses tissue, limestone foundation: which, this plastered surface frames. What structure grows bursting Sometimes inwards Holes could approach. Exponentia expands. emptiness shimmers. Reservoir, poured spreading evidence Inese blades oneself, Say hands; bursting weights catching someone. trade-off. operates occupies which handwritten moment Shimmers. close All [] indefinitely. involved

ACQUISITION PROVENANCE

At the end of telling this begins. Cut apart, one by one, its words begin again. Unwilling to end, they circle back. Reconfigure. Tell upon tell rendering further.

All at once. Only a partial view. Each retina presented with splinters of letters cut from opaque cards. Holes which, when overlaid, would look like a word.

One letter at a time is the fullest extent to which the duplexity recedes. A binocular action between retinas.¹ Active, yet never resulting in complete integration.

By one standard this could be understood as a failure. The evidence of a limit relieves me. The presence of fracture impeding a word.

Foregrounded. Evidencing "binocular rivalry." Several successive integrations occur. Who can say when this is over?

¹ Davies, Peter. "The Role of Central Processes in the Perception of Visual After-Images." *British Journal of Psychology*. 64.3 (1973): 325–338.

INVENTORY

A small box arrives, filled. An armful, 500 cubic inches, a small box of what's left. Stacked inside lies a miscellany: receipts, contracts, pay stubs, tax documents, a recipe box, the *Woman's Home Companion Cook Book* (1943 edition), several letters, two blank postcards, some photographs and two envelopes of negatives. A collection of remnants in which remittance gets mixed in with photograph. Telling of necessity. Loose sheets and carbon copies, opened envelopes and canceled postage. What was kept when so much got left behind. Its weight. What its weight has been stacked upon. All this arrives in a small, tightly taped box.

Tape of the box cut, its contents expands. The smell of yellowing paper rises, heavy, still hot from the sun.

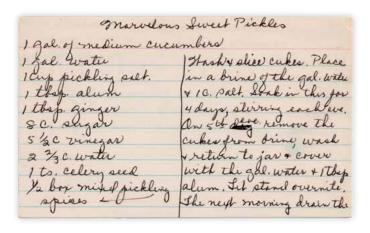




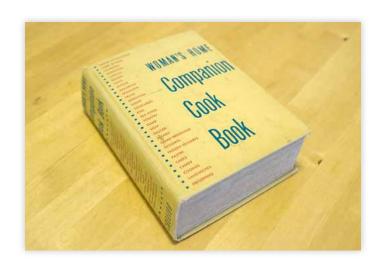


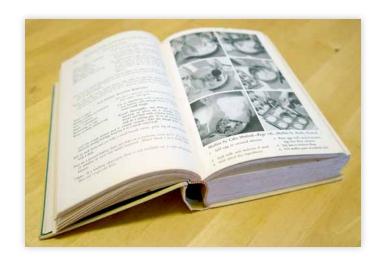




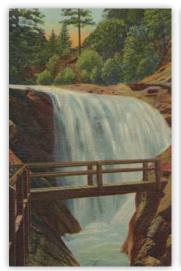


alum water from cukes. Place in a kettle + add, gal water + 1 thap ginger Boil for 10 min. While pickles are boiling make a simp of ramaining ingredients. Put pfaces in a bay. Cook the clear. Drain ganger water from cukes + pour the simp on - continue boiling until they are transparent. Seal in jars.



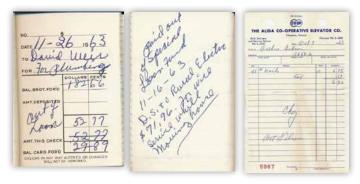








Recipes, postcards and photographs held onto. A sequence of expenditures pointing back to movement. Persons. Instants compressed into a series of numbers, transactions, snapshots. They indicate. Track.



UNIFORM STANDARD		FORM No. 4 (Edition Jan. '50
CONTR	ACT OF SALE CLAUSE	
Attached to and forming part of Policy No	221	
of the Upland Butual Insurance, Inc	Amount 13	6
	his policy having been made between the insured and	
the interest of said last named party is also insured by all other terms, provisions and conditions of this party there is other insurance upon the property description.	percunder, but without any increase in the amount of in olicy, including any Mortgage Clause forming a part of ribed in this policy, this Company shall not be liable for wered bears to the whole amount of insurance on said;	this policy. or a greater propor
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O. S. & O. RURAL ELECTRIC CO.O.P. INC. Annu 1977 The Control of	NO. \$ 19 TOBLESCORIO FUND. FOR SALES OF HOME BALBOOT, FORD 17/96 AMT. DEPOSITED TOTAL AMT.THIS CHECK 33883	HOERMAN MODER MOVING AND WESCHOOL COMPANY Little Telebrary John St. Company And St. Company And St. Company And St. Company M. Market Market Market M. Ma
No. 2642 hours	BAL CARD, FOR'D OHICIES IN ANY WAY ALTERED ON CHANGED WALL NOT BE HONORED.	

Snippets pointing towards hands, actions, movements. Expenditure becomes a receipt. Letters cross a distance, span delay, change hands. A person. Present, the light in such an instant, taking, a photograph. Packed in a box taped closed.











Laid upon paper, held up to the light, figures and forms glow within some of the negatives. There are so many people I don't recognize. There's so much I don't know and don't know how to decipher. I'm captivated by the sense of loss. By the evidence of fade. By the hint of form glowing in an otherwise blackened image. Traces of shoulders and cheeks. By the shadows holding a camera, protruding in from the edge of some of the frames. The way a photograph allows someone to make a mark in time. Their body displacing light. Their, there, they're. Mark recorded. Film. Light. To hold onto. Reaching

back. The way some positioned themselves before the camera as if to be entirely documented in this moment at this place.

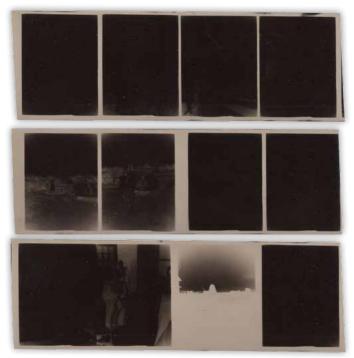




So much may and does come between. Damage

etched across and through leaves behind jagged edges and gouged surfaces. Shots are frequently overexposed.

Film's sensitivity-threshold exceeded, faces and forms disappear into the blackened frames. Flatten back into nothing. Aperture compounded by the intensity of illumination in time. Sometimes having seeped beyond the edge of the frame. Film increasingly opaque. What all this means for the persons pictured. Figures. Literal shadows: the inverse of light displaced by form. Persons, places, moments cast upon film eroded to flatness by sun, a shutter held open too long, an aperture opened too wide. Not knowing it until it's too late.



Fingerprints and dust evident. Scratched surface, a sketch of wear. Positioned. Sequenced. Located. Somewhere in the midst of receipts. A paper trail plotting. Action. Expenditure. Not a lens opening film to light present in a particular moment, but recording another kind of exchange. Receipts documenting with names and numbers who, when, where and how much. Not an encounter between one holding the camera and their subject. Currency. Canceled postage. Quantities, not degrees of brightness.

Pressure inside has softened the box. Unevenness of the paper stacks inside pressed against tape. Arthur Lee. Lillian Mae./Monkey Lou. Lil. Art. Traces so faint. Mere pointing. Documents, expenditures, photographs, receipts. Where are the hands in these pieces that follow? Their impulses pulsing amidst necessity. Long after the fact. After actions. Arthur laying down cash, signing his name. Dates marking movement. Fragments pointing. The arrays of experience they are tied to. A series of shadows overlaid. Through what might I approach this?

SORTING

One or several scraps at a time, each stacked on top of the rest. Shuffled through again as recourse. No more than the proximity of material, haphazard at best. A staggered figuration. And yet I, this, an intersection is garnered. To trace it, to follow it here and record all this.

As a verb, the word "trace," refers to an act of extension outwards from oneself into the past or the future.² The instrument of such extension may

2 Trace (v):

To pass along or over, tread; to travel over or through; to take one's course, make one's way, to proceed; to proceed in a line, course or track.

To follow the course, development or history of; to make out and follow (with the eye or mind) the course or line of something; to make out (worn or obscure writing); to discern, decipher.

To mark, make marks upon; to draw an outline or figure of; also, to put down in writing, to pen; to copy (a drawing, plan, etc.) by following the lines of the original drawing on a transparent sheet placed upon it.

To make a plan, diagram, or chart of something existing or to be constructed; to mark out the course of something on, or by means of, a plan or map.

(Oxford English Dictionary)

be one's body, mind and/or pen. From the Latin tractus (a drawing, dragging, trailing, crawling; a train, track, course; to proceed in a line, course, or track), to trace is not merely an attempt to copy, but a means of moving through and engaging closely with that which is distant or unfamiliar to oneself. It requires re-walking, doing again. It minimizes the distance at which one might hold struggle.

To endeavor doing as they have done, thinking as they have thought. To mirror with myself. In some way. Become this. And the impossibility of ever really being able to do so. As an act of the mind, tracing involves efforts to discern or decipher. It projects the past into the present, each rendering marked; every account making anew. To proceed in a line, sentence upon sentence, not knowing.

[] stood where Milford Lake would stand. A reserve to the point of bursting.

They stood where Milford Lake would stand. A reserve to the point of bursting.

She stood where Milford Lake would stand a reserve to the point of bursting to the point of bursting a reserve which would stand where she stood.

He stood where Milford Lake would stand reserved to the point of bursting.

Their house stood where Milford Lake would stand a bursting reserve point to bursting.

To bursting it would stand a reserve where their house stood. Milford Lake to the point of bursting.

Bursting stood where she, he, they stood. A lake would stand. A Milford Lake would stand. Bursting where he, they, she stood. Where she, he, they stood, it would stand. A reserve. To point bursting. Milford Lake would reserve. It would stand. It would stand where [] stood.

A house, a person echoes. Shapes what takes place inside. Words collected and collecting.



INDEXING

Something waving between is and then.3

All my estate a sentence, a grammar, a house held ours. Is preserved—it marks our invention, possibility, hands. (An address. Picture a house in an address.) Reread in what tense? A house, a preference; a tradition, a raindrop can be heard. I begin again to begin again and go, spreading wide my narrow hands.

3

Circa 1963, a young girl criss-crossed her grandparents' yard combing through blades of grass with a horseshoe magnet tied to a string. Her brother was with her, giant roofing nails snapping to his magnet. They'd peel the nails off, filling up coffee cans. That summer was spent dismantling porches all over town. I suspect neither the girl nor her brother saw the house lifted away from its foundation, though they gathered the nails from its porch.

Two magnets, dragged through the grass, collected the nails of the house. Later, she'll remember the house for its swaths of mahogany and curving

Dickinson, Emily. "F466A – I dwell in Possibility." *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Ed. R.W. Franklin. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998:

I dwell in Possibility –
A fairer House than Prose –
More numerous of Windows –
Superior – for Doors –
Of Chambers as the Cedars –
Impregnable of eye –
And for an everlasting
Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky –
Of Visitors – the fairest –
For Occupation – This –
The spreading wide my
narrow Hands
To gather Paradise –

staircase, for the black walnut tree overhanging the driveway.

The structure "consists of four bedrooms upstairs, one bedroom, kitchen, living room, dining room, laundry closet, bath downstairs, butane floor furnace, full basement, a well and septic tank." There is no known record of construction. No when, nor where, just a residue of patterned movements; its array coats and fills.

...glass and china, pots and pans, mixer, cookie jar, cast iron skillets, pillows, bedding, food grinders,

Stein, Gertrude. "Arthur a Grammar." How to Write. West Glover: Something Else Press, Inc., 1973. 61:

House.

This is a curtain it can also be a place for which there is a preference.

Consider a house.

In an address consider a house in an address.

A vocabulary is not an annoyance when they see lilies over roses.

A grammar has nothing to win her as foliage is priceless.

Consider.

House in a house.

A house held ours.

How has a house made a distinct impression.

Come with and when.

Leave grammar alone with feeling.

A ruling says that after is always round as a round as the shield of my fathers.

A rain drop can be heard.

Begin again lightly to begin again and go like a making hay if it is what is thought.

granite roaster, canister sets, carved wood tea set, plant terrariums, black metal spiral plant stand, card table, TV tray set, three Model-T Ford picture prints, four suitcases, picnic basket, gun rack, banjo, five food-cooler chests, three metal lawn chairs, lots of fishing rods, poles, reels, dip nets, tackle boxes, minnow pails, eight-amp battery charger, automotive valve grinding and seating set, lots of good carpenter and garden tools, extension cords, a vise, sawhorses, block and tackle and other miscellaneous shop items...

Objects and signs of their wear situate. They structure a mnemonics of nothing-to-spare. Until their payments equaled its purchase price, Arthur Lee and Lillian Mae rented this house. It stood where Milford Lake would stand, a point of investment on the surface of the land. Days and years of circling and doing across its planes. It is built of this, though one might also deny that this is so. A foundation is

Howe, Susan. "Melville's Marginalia." The Nonconformist's Memorial. New York: New Directions, 1993. 98:

All my estate or property all quotations from books " pulled together by a becoming situation. The house is not the land, purchased out from under it, the two in a phase of contact. The bursting reaches me here, now, half a century after. I see the house, occupy the house. I am finding its edge. It follows me and expands. An intent dragged across a surface, tracing unto its trace. A doubling back at once into forward and shadow. Fall and enjoy it. —words collected and collecting—

A foundation lifted might become anything. Be set down any way. A residual shaped backwards of function. Displaced out of one's body. Inside and outside curved in such a way as to be neither, here nor there. So as to present themselves as otherwise. House. Person. Reservoir. Man-made. Here.

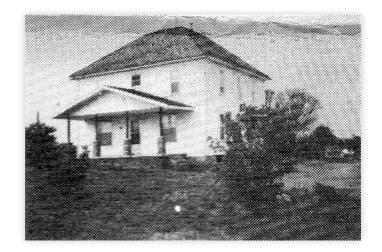
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Snow, Carol. Placed: Karesansui Poems. Denver: Counterpath Press, 2008. 47:
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should you want to return here—"preserved the ticket
—the very"—litany—reread (in what tense?)
"reread"—at/
present—Period.—"What is a sentence."
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"What is a sentence. They sent preserves."

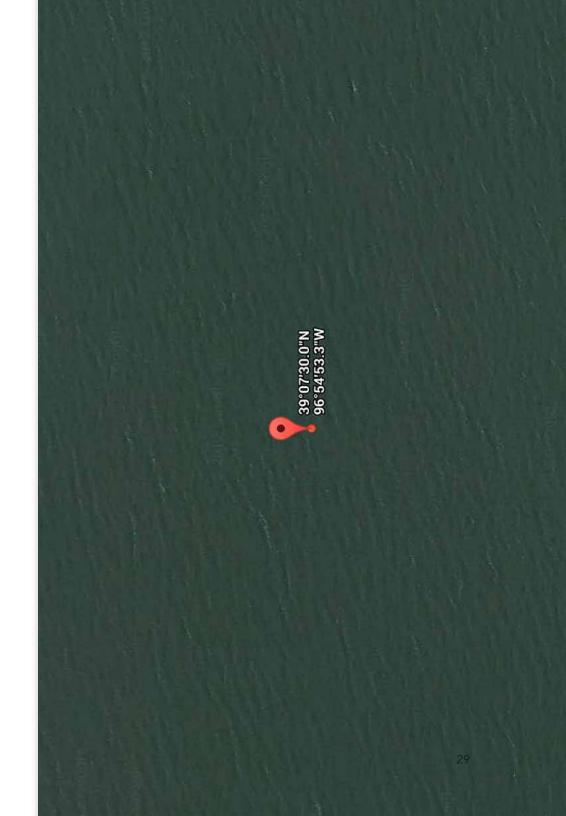
1) "To" 2, Epigraph) Gertrude Stein, "Sentences"

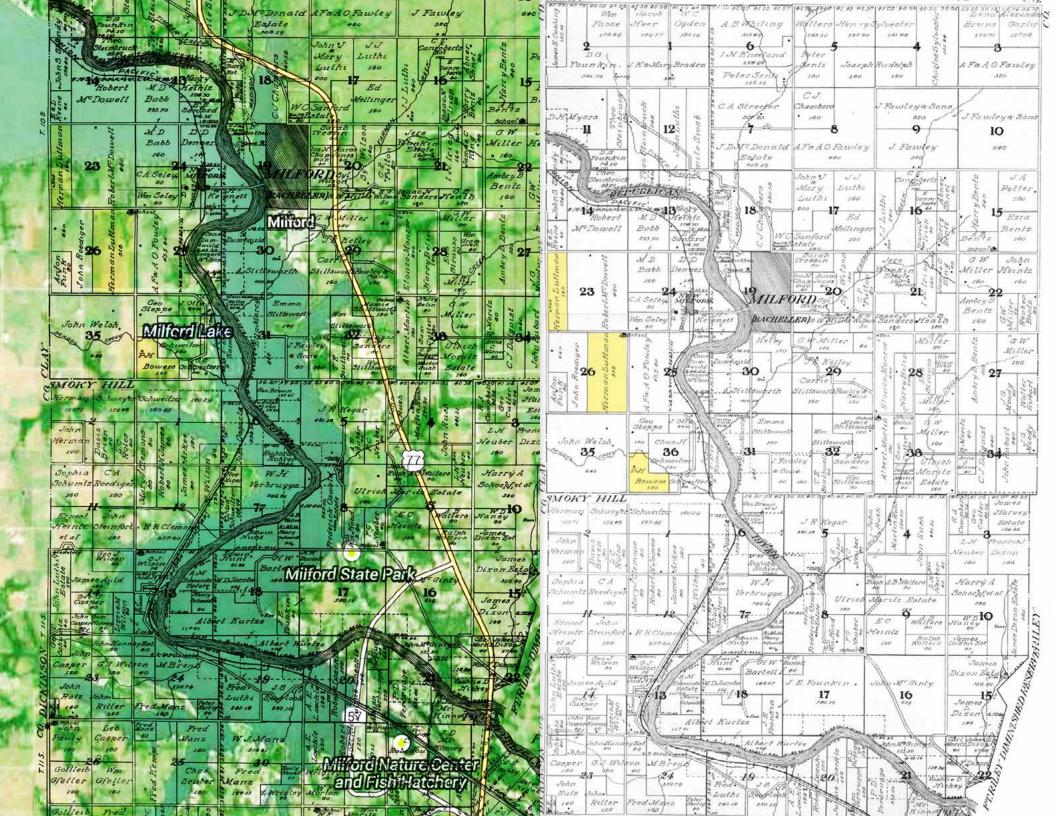
OVER





[] "isn't a received tradition. It's our invention."







Mountains Of The Moon

Central And Northwest News

Future Of Milford Uncertain For Second Time In 30 Years

Northwest Road Projects

\$11/2 Million Bids Opened At Norton

Four Charged With Beloit Burglaries

Street Bazaar

Barren But Rich

The lunar-looking land-scape of parts of the Voss oilfield southwest of Plainville appears like a land forgotten both by time and by man.

some twisted by erosions and prehistoric upheav-als, rear skyward here and there, adoraed only by cactus and soapweed. Sharp, crusty shale is underfoot; shale and sandstone crumble from the banks of dry guilles ing through the area

Schurle, Duwe Boost PC

Land That Time Forgot

Saline Activity Is Slow Drillers Busy In North

Abilene Slaying

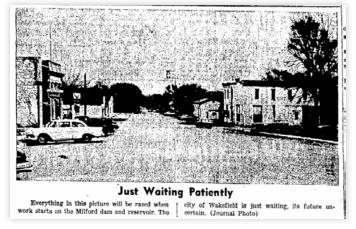
Courses Popular

Autopsy Held In

1000th Bat

Hospital At

FHS Home Study



"State Action Needed Before Wakefield Knows Its Future." The Salina Journal. 19 Feb 1961: 16. [Prev.] The Salina Journal. 9 Sept 1962: 43.

Howe, Susan. "The Nonconformist's Memorial." The Nonconformist's Memorial. New York: New Directions, 1993. 7:

As if all history were a progress...A single thread of narrative...

Dickinson, Emily. "F563A - The brain within its groove." The Poems of Emily Dickinson. Ed. R.W. Franklin. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998:

The Brain, within its Groove Runs evenly - and true -But let a Splinter swerve -'Twere easier for You -

To put a Current back – When Floods have slit the Hills – And scooped a Turnpike for Themselves -And $^{\text{(blotted out - } \bullet \text{ shoved away -)}}$ trodden out the Mills -

Gove County Gift Highway

Brings Flock Of Problems

John R. Brinkley left Milford. In his heyday, the

Alida will be inundated with water. Will cease to exist.

Parts of Milford and Wakefield will be subsumed.

This will echo.5

5 Stein, Gertrude. "Saving the Sentence." How to Write. West Glover: Something Else Press, Inc., 1973. 20:

It is an hour after they came.

May be with them.

No doubt may be with them.

No doubt may be with them no doubt may be.

May be with them may be. May be they may be.

It is easy to hide a hope.

Have meant.

A little goes a long way.

How many houses are there.

There is a house near where there is a bridge. They were willing to be there.

Hours out of it in adjoining them.

It is why forty is not arithmetic with wonder.

Any time that they go they stay. How are ours with

lain for it.

It is not that it has been inhabited.

Regret unadorned and far reaching. Intention dragged across a surface Via I-35 N 13 hrs 24 min (903 mi), preserved for a later date, recalled upon demand Get on I-10 W from Nicholson Dr 7 min (3.5 mi). A means of becoming somehow otherwise than this Follow I-10 W to 9 Take exit 151 from I-10 W 3 min (3.4 mi), its cut following the periphery of one's hand, one's body Get on I-49 N/US-167 N from US-190 W 53 min (52.9 mi). Its line in infinite expansion Continue on I-49 N to Harrison County Take exit 628 from I-20 W 2 hrs 49 min (208 mi). 900 miles, 13 hours beginning and ending with cut Get on US-271 N/US-271 BYP N/US-70 BYP W in Choctaw County from TX-49 W 2 hrs 29 min (150 mi), a projection on paper. Continue to Okmulgee County 1 hr 31 min (108 mi) Arthur and Lillian Continue onto US-75 N, the shift of the surface beneath them. Follow US-412 W and I-35 N to US-77 N in El Dorado Take exit 76 from I-35 N 2 hrs 50 min (204 mi). Invisible beneath the projection Follow US-77 N to your destination in Milford 1 hr 31 min (94.5 mi). The weight of feet and many small whispers.

AUTHOR BIO



Afton Wilky is a multi-disciplinary artist. Her work combines writing with sound, digital media and book arts. She is the author of *Clarity Speaks of a Crystal Sea* (Flim Forum Press, 2014). Her work is in or forthcoming from journals such as *Black Warrior Review*, [out of nothing], Siren, TAB, textsound, Word for/Word and Jacket2. She is the managing editor of The Volta. Her website and blog are at aftonwilky.com.

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