

Theories of Performance

J a y B e s e m e r



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Theories of Performance
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Theories of Performance

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OTHER ACTORS

in the movie we were all called
& we went west & were turned
back, or turned into light.
it wasn't what i thought it was
going to be, some tryptophan-
like stupor from eating too much
of something clucky.

instead, i came to pass,
called differently, wore different
names for action or aggregate.

i danced, if you can believe it,
kilt flying & the dog-ear thing
in the thatch all jumpy.

other actors grasped me by
the shoulders, gave me coffee,
mineral water. other actors.
& one smiled, pressed his beard
to mine, breathing slowly.

[pause and breathe]

IN THE PRESENCE OF CAMERAS

the priest of hummingbirds

elaborates:

in your refuge the bone meal

drifts in fugues

from corner to corner,

sad husk of merchandise

left over.

i am the metronome

i am the part of his speech

that oscillates.

make a beeline

make a pillow

& sew inside it the skeleton

of a nightjar.

moved to a light-tight room

the priest refuses to speak,

to eat or to imitate

the bestsellers.

contemplation yields

to fact-checking

then step-dancing

then shoveling shit

against the door.

eradication is out of favor;
now it's all irradiation
& the strength that comes
from leaning on a fence
in the presence of
cameras.

i am the runt
of the moment
i am the all-access
wristband
i am the hummingbird,
the actual hummingbird.

ANOTHER DOG

make plans, lemon coke,
air conditioner over door
& linoleum tile, ferns.

inside the imaginary
ekphrastic, a heartbeat
& a tumble dry.

i want to deny the evidence
of my blister, my
serendipity, yet

the lid hops on the kettle
& the steam, & the steam
makes a dime stand

on its edge for no good
reason. down at the
farmer's market

someone's dog dyed
cerulean leaps

again & again through

hoops. there in the middle
a display of peonies;
i sit covering myself

in ants, petals,
zip-ties & sap.
solemn kids approach,

cookies enabled,
cookies outstretched.

i am another dog, a strange dog.