

*murmur in the inventory*



erica lewis

*murmur  
in the  
inventory*

Shearsman Books

First published in the United Kingdom in 2013 by  
Shearsman Books  
50 Westons Hill Drive  
Emersons Green  
BRISTOL  
BS16 7DF

Shearsman Books Ltd Registered Office  
30–31 St. James Place, Mangotsfield, Bristol BS16 9JB  
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[www.shearsman.com](http://www.shearsman.com)

ISBN 978-1-84861-238-9

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#### Acknowledgements

Portions of *murmur in the inventory* have appeared in the following publications: *Little Red Leaves* (section one), *New American Writing* (excerpts from section five), *With+Stand* (“it starts from what you don’t know”), *Word For/Word* (excerpts from sections two and three), *Parthenon West Review* (“think of this as tragic,” “this is also true,” “people search out the ghosts they find”), *Critiphoria* (“life is not a personal thing,” “there is a third dimension to the story,” “look at your hands”), and *Ping Pong* (excerpts from section five). A chap project featuring portions of *murmur in the inventory* was published by Ypolita Press.

Many thanks to those editors for their support.

Additional thanks to Norma Cole, Ariel Goldberg, and Rob Halpern.

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for mark:  
thank you for living with me and my ghosts



An inventory is literally a list of what is found or encountered, from the Latin *invenire*, to come upon. But in the age of “everything at the edge of everything,” with “things not lasting at all,” inventory itself becomes a shadow, a blur, an impossibility. The crisis of infinite worlds: how could anyone catalog the encounters of even one hour of one day on Facebook, Twitter, Google, the Internet? erica lewis is a poet or eulogist of memory, who seeks in the materiality of body a language that could make the present persist beyond the nanomoments we increasingly exist within.

Our bodies are “forever recomposing” in these pages. As the poems accumulate and aggregate, meaning shimmers in a nacreous between, a “dislocated cloud” of fragments that would suture us: body to body, person to person, life to life. The poems drive to our hardinesses—bones, teeth, nails—to insist that amid all the sloughing off of history and experience we still are built of something solid, and that we are “going to have to scream that it hurts,” all this loss. And while we are left ghosts of ourselves, in separate existences, the shadows and murmurs that erica lewis weaves together in this courageously beautiful book chase “the memory / of our sacred” with a fierce love that will reach out and grab you.

—Dan Thomas-Glass



-----margin or error or understanding  
as if we had been better all along portraying fragments



one



-----in this separate existence was a shape

you are still here where i left you

you are your own ghost

-----i liked the memory of the arrangement

unsupported in this space of only you

how

to use place as substitute

this law of reserved effort

-----that most things we are drawn to only because  
they are familiar

jotted on the back of photographs

the things that trouble us

that often linger

some old advice

floats to the surface

that lullaby

the back of a photograph

people say i'm crazy but i believe that you just have to

live with the things

the juxtaposition

in what you don't see

the great hot emptiness ahead

what you keep calling memory

-----to shrug off

the urgency

we wean ourselves from ourselves

-----the secret of the straying  
and straying is its flight into the strange  
in the midst of the familiar

the very clear

sense of aching

awareness of how far short

need is an ending is an analysis

fragments from the metal

the low spark

spaces trying to get out etc. etc.

how particles accumulate

how we particle reveal and then the particular

distance is not something you believe in

and yet you are so far from yourself

the wind

the dust

you know this isn't everything

say it

say it

-----between

a firework and a reflection

i said water

i mean forever

i touched those eyelids as objects

as captions of brevity

as you know her only as what survives in fragments

i touched those objects

to capture change

throw it away

it may seem less relevant

i don't know why that's why

it's why

the job is to take and tell the stories

-----the rip out window  
the scaffold holding up your

inadvertent

this spurt response caught in your head

or window your faceted object

like how you have worked and worked lather  
now there's a real piece of me

location diffused as linger

you've been drifting again

you say that because there is nothing to remember

so as not in the place

you will need to replace the brakes  
to see how you use lonely