

Lisa Robertson / *from* DEBBIE: AN EPIC

## EXORDIUM

Hello nurses of words flattened as if  
pronominal and parthenogenic  
at the ordinary site of desire  
striate light articulates the spurious  
clacking of thought private justice cuts  
lozenges into the blue your sewn lips  
blent with the obfuscating grief of dun  
grasses bent into themselves far phalanx

I speak to judge crimes of filiation  
as hard sky spent cancelled horizon  
my own mouth barking perhaps I am  
unmentionable ticking against the  
dark adjacency of prose lovely home  
of gods and punctuation I say this  
against the long and burning hills in the  
slatey cold of debt

Dark artemis's division unpracticed  
splits into the staccato glamour of  
february trickles lurex through the  
arbitrary and distant apple tree  
a girl's hard russet lace — it is the dreamt  
world it is the buckled marsh hawked rhythmic

I see girls who as if armed and in  
formation one figure seated and one  
other standing — or two seated love  
approaching— flaunt the pliant display of  
tenderness

                  others folding clothes one slight  
ly bent to place her folded garment her  
companion turning around ribboned  
thigh to watch her bend compel you to enter  
those rooms

                  another will want to dream just

of those animals associated  
with deities or Queens yet still display  
the abstinent charm of insouciant  
Venus (Venus after Venus stepped  
out)

some are called sweetheart and polish the  
sexual lens as if it were a blurred  
age

one's exact rage ranks an acrid point

Nouns and nerves decay sluices imply  
honey or grease of light wrecks to frilled rust  
equivocal as certain clocks trees die  
hello nurses of clinical distance  
with irony antiquity salts thee

## A SMALL TOAST

Suburban love is fenced in acid  
Civilian love is flush

All living animals need touch  
Except for those that don't

I guess

The resemblance of pleasure brings  
A dividend of doubt

But forensics could not quantify  
the basted evenings furrow

When cities with their citizens  
Are molten slings for thought

And pleasure is the whelp I tend  
A supernal chiaroscuro

Though complicity thy name is woven  
Of unctuous polyphony

A civilianesque proclivity  
Has clasped around my throat

This vulture cloak, a streamlined joke  
Or greek machine for living

And from surfeit of sprung circumstance  
I toast

O disquisit book of marginalia  
Each feral daughter knows