

Jes Battis / 13 WAYS OF LOOKING AT GRAD SCHOOL

1

i went to grad school because it seemed like a thing to do
because it seemed to exist more concretely than my own body
it rained as i drove the sky was particularly cruel

2

grad school was a series of parking lots i found
there was a lot of tunneling going on a lot of frantic exit procedures
i needed to unpack i

3

doors were confusing at first
because they were grad school doors they couldn't take you
anywhere
merely talk to you about distance

4

i had an office it was small and mine
grad school couldn't get in or out couldn't knock didn't need to
as it was already everywhere (floating)

5

here at grad school we work to make you a better thinking substance
take this subjectivity hmm feel its cool edge quite astonishing isn't
it how the old things just peel away

6

when i was asleep i would sometimes see a burning ~~bush~~ book
filled with inscrutable letters how they curled and i didn't have
to understand them but then wake to grad school and realize
that i did

7

why do you imagine jobs when you could stay in grad school
with me stay in grad school with me

8

i couldn't leave grad school because i was always there
every escape hatch led back there even the steps that led to
my front door didn't really

9

my parents would introduce me as "grad school" or at least that's
all i would hear at that point the conversation would take a
noticeable
dip i would reach for the cheese and crackers smiling politely

10

this is written entirely in one pronoun which forces you to walk
in on this poem naked turn your head and say “oh i’m sorry” but
you can’t unsee it because it’s a trap i learned it in grad school

11

i could never read a book and know it i could never speak without
my hand in some irony i could never enough never get close
never be experimental without letting the scars on my back show
because this is grad school and we ought to be honest with each
other

12

“certain slant of light” was taken i couldn’t use it but really if all poets
are making appearances in their poems then i’m giving it up for
celebrity i’m going to drive out of grad school and keep going until
i don’t feel breath on my cheek until it breaks

13

this i that the author refers to is obviously a split subject obviously
under a lot of stress but “grad school” could mean anything really
[a bone flute] [her blue look] [tender assumption] . . .
. . . or a preposition of some kind we’re trying to narrow it down

