

Laura Elrick / from *FANTASIES IN PERMEABLE
STRUCTURES*

XIV

There's a seditious joy in a thronging crowd.
So much that even when convened in crisis
(a mildly subdued terror boiling just
beneath the surface) there races a surging power
felt anew. Almost remembered, this power to
create, in short, in *spite* of this destruction
a new normality. (Not malady) a breathing life
through city's buildings on our terms
terms of life fashioned *by* us not imposed
and by so *scant* a percentage. Among the numbers
I walked. The streets open-veined and tossing
swelling information towards the seas
of Union Square, where every face was sweating
in the summer heat — thrown out into a meeting
with our substance. We were the stuff
that animates every structure bearing down

its granite orders. This horror glimpsed, in eyes
then verged euphoric in a brass of song . . .
All codified exchanges dropped away
hysterico-historical time new-measured by
this civic animality. The walls, though standing
seemed a mere screen we overran, a screen
we'd seeped through meekly out of habit
now deposed. Great writhing arteries, tossed
over rivers, our cost-bits flowing
neither singly nor in pairs but as one
variegated / whole I am *not* a soloist
but hermaphrodous a porous cell completely
uncontainable, overflowing homes
throngs in the property of blocks it
thinks — somewhat on its own — outside
its bursting parts — presage to revolution.

XV

But it passed. In just two cycles of the clock.
Slack rhythms though — for once, we didn't gauge
night by digital number, but through degrees
dark determined the coming day. Then as if
waking to sleep, it felt. Back to separate scores
and individual constraints — the throngs
receded seeming to have sucked away even
the tide. And left the street a beach paved
in littered images (with an energy felt inward
corresponding). That structural gale rushed
the streets swept us outward towards ourselves
only to dissipate . . . and recommend the intellect
again. Towards futures straining in such proofs that
patient as domestic habit, the granite order
Is. *Electric wealth re-grids into regions*
of abstract time. By divisible unit, that light

the way it seems so constant a glow
though parceled out in profit wires from
Lake Ontario. Two winters back we fled this — out
from the city, two fiends. And decompressing
grew along each mile we tracked (the Hudson)
until illuminated trees . . . and elves! and angels!
decked the roofs in gaudy cheer. And we grew sad
from repetition and removal. So entered a
forest — (plunder it?) No! we stopped the car
and ventured out into beleaguered woods enthralled
by some deep tunneling grove that we imagined.
Strange of still black swan, unused to moon
and night-criers we — FEAR — swung back
towards the electric wealthy town. Was then
their barks the birch switched up. From white
to black on white-of-street lit up the background

XVI

On a plane then, be it, soaring cage with him
too distant. Shrinking space with shrunken time.
We realize this Denver of geography.
In steely arc descend, two confused distorted
locals? Our bodies ripped from that system
remain, somehow, ticking; Oh! Our hearts
beat hard to fill us. And the peaks appeared
some Island in the sky — we'd crossed a sea
of clouds. Those crowds we left dissolved
or, were they real? Then *this* the aspect
of our sleeping minds. Evacuation. Place
had been remade. A shrink-wrapped set
of paved coordinates — we navigate
to reach the Alpine stream. Cars, with teens
as arms screech past, maroon us on the pavement
near the scorched Platte. A solitudinous

monster cottonwood mocking where we might
have tied our horses (aw). Perhaps
a pit-stop? at the Rock Bottom brewery? will
help? What it showed us about this we:
We drove. We locked. We drove and locked
and drove. We glanced. We closed. We kept
our eyes averted. We longed for the city couldn't
wait to get back. Yet when we're back
we're sour. Sour anxious in congestion (It's
brick out there, it's *hardly* a park) On the
grass-lumped and hard grounds of North
Brooklyn. Perhaps growing from the soil of this
Imperium. The cranially abstract "landscape"
dislocation. The hypervisible shadowless
"sprouts" laminate *how things grow* . . .
Out. In the worst of conditions.