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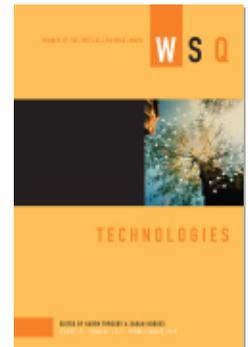
Departure

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DEPARTURE 1

LAYNIE BROWNE

From numbers, from numbers as we expect them, from expectancy, life expectancy, we could do better or worse. We could be numberless, formless. Departure from claims and taxes. Departure from the dateline, from confirmation codes, from traffic patterns which claim our bodies. Departure from the tower. Never blown up. Departure from maintenance of failing systems, maimed weather, chronic symptoms and symptomatic forgetfulness.

There is no sadness here you say, departing from the embankment of what you no longer desire. It is given up easily, a first and false answer, peeled and pleated, disregarded. Departure from who you were once becoming. Departure from a song and servitude. Departure from exile, from arson, from reduplication, prevarication and silence.

DEPARTURE 2

Departure from that vehicle from becoming vehicular, from nice meeting you—liar, from cell phones in the library, from time as a target or a tangent from tangential. From will you please be quiet, in which language? From thought which is thinking its way not in any direction as if this were separate from your dominion, as if you have no say as to your thinking, from how many calls must we still make and from comparisons and regarding the public square is too bright and this music is too “aquarium drinker.” Departure from everything which is not precisely that infusion, injection. Departure from mortality and immortality from fixtures and cemented obligations which ignore the quickening of the, dare I say? Blink if you can hear me. Departure from that swerving to get your attention from the chopped-up sidewalk, from crab spiders and brown aggressive spiders, from killing or fearing them, from cohabitation. From dead in the road, walking past aware and not aware of the power—squashed, from apprehensive. This heat. And those frigid summers, continually waiting, waiting for the fog to lift. From recursive seminar magistrate orchestral wandering by which we are bleakly plainly lost.

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From everything that piles up, that we've paid no attention to, departure from our neglect from ringleader asbestos ignorance, debris, outgrown principles. OK, no homes for you, no appointments where you're not regarded as a person. From kind ineffectual persons speaking slowly on the telephone. From cruel fast and vicarious menageries. From ill talk, ill speech, illness, critical retorts on documentary do-gooders from whoever is dumbly thinking the center of the universe is only where they reside and good-humouredly assure you must visit and get out of your provincial stink-rot. From cynical rootless phobic molecular boredom. From theater less televised false reality maelstrom. From serial stupidity subscribed to in atrocious numbers. From all for profit, let's ignore the face of it, from do you have a face, from blending in, toxic bedrock, security which makes us sicker. From public space indigents with no place to—go to your favorite conditional supporter. From judgmental, this is not my life, termites, timetables, fitting you in, dressing you up and smelly footwear. From pulverizing sun and non-solar waste.

These prose poems are from a book called Scorpyn Odes. In this work, odes are interspersed with poems titled "Departure," which muse upon current cultural maladies. The pieces included here comment on some possible misuses of technology—especially a tendency to move at a speed that precludes thought and the dangerous reality of representing persons as numbers. This work also explores the possibility of "departure" as locomotion or energy source, considering technology as potential liberator.

LAYNIE BROWNE is the author of seven collections of poetry and one novel. Her most recent publications include *The Scented Fox* (Wave Books, 2007), recipient of the 2007 National Poetry Series Award, selected by Alice Notley; *Daily Sonnets* (Counterpath Books, 2007); and *Drawing of a Swan Before Memory* (University of Georgia Press, 2005), winner of the Contemporary Poetry Series.