

# The Closed Spaces

ALSO BY ANGELA GARDNER

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# Contents

## THE CLOSED SPACES

Until Its Light, in That Vessel, Falls Away	11
Lumen	12
Certainties	13
Small-Water	18
The Closed Spaces	19
Attending to Uncertainty	20
Outside the Gate	21
Blueprints	23

## BLUEPRINTS

The Time on the Moon	27
The Bridge	28
Light Itself Diminishes	29
That Bite. Spike. Spikenard	30
The Dog Watch	31
Passage	39
Cool the Sky	40
After the Distraction	41
The River	42
The Price of Entry	43

## THE GAZE

Poem Ending with a Quote from Robyn Davidson	47
Of Word Yet Not	48
The Gaze	49
A Brief Account of the Inner Cloud	64
No Thing of Flying	65
A Shadow Leaving	66

Fireworks	67
Trance	68
In the Twilight House	69

## OBJECT PERMANENCE

Dream State	73
Falling Asleep in the Gaeltacht	74
Object Permanence	75
The Stars That Night	90

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	92
<i>Notes</i>	93

‘it’s not as though making it through unaltered is the point.’

Colin Cheney, *Phaethon, here be monsters*



# THE CLOSED SPACES



## Until Its Light, in That Vessel, Falls Away

A sky indefinite and indigo as the sun at its pinnacle  
or as thunder, drones. Something in the way of  
light...the season, after Summer, before it is Summer again  
: an in-between where tomorrow's clouds are forming.  
Low: in twists and turns, circling, a body in motion follows  
flying, passing, revelatory, detecting an opening, breath  
inside the flesh. A life held in observance or adoration  
until the light, in that vessel, falls away.

To lift is to lighten  
its ritual hold of air to earth. Crouched in the mechanics  
of grief it is a strangeness; lacking sound or colour  
a world of unmarked paths. For everything depends  
upon the other, even if by that very instrument, parts  
of the whole tear other parts to bloodied fragments – as  
a prey animal is heaved from its body in shrieking terror.

## Lumen

Shown more  
than we can bear are we windows or mirrors?

Wingspans we could beating see, in daub and winnow  
the resting planet in its ebb. Moments, sparks of light.

For multiple selves now reflect and replace the sky  
our candlelight and imaginings.

And wholly unnecessary we drew up  
bog meadow's scatter of kingcup and orchid.

Mirrors  
into negative space, into meander and mischance  
before a dark that enters.

We had believed ourselves windows.  
Is it raining? Our human eyes are dumb.

## Certainties

from this first Tuesday  
it doesn't matter about Ohio

it never did except for this

the white picket fence remains  
and beyond the pale

one hundred thousand dead

*(not small sorrows).*

If such people have much value  
it is as the end consumer

(for we must never mind the cost)

they have felt the presence of large shadows

a semblance of birds  
given the weight of Industry

§

A single voice under the blind world

many times to the fact saying

*No  
I never  
I was duty bound*

This does not save you

Nor being new in this state that force arouses  
regarding order as grounds for doubtful comfort

§

And in the painful abyss  
you may discern the same thing

the long way of tears  
even without the martyrdoms that others enter

If such people have much value  
it is that they are manipulable

expendable once the work is done

While behind

shrewd as glass for your defects  
the expert torturers lie

§

*What did they say?  
Why did they do what they did?*

not enough lost and so many offences

Tell me  
I am wanting of that faith  
that gains in error

or turns on the anguish of the people

*That anyone would willingly*

Others may know the place  
where pits uncover  
the slack cream of a shoulder

that speaks a covert repose

eye movements become a film without sound  
exhumed

§

If I collected myself as a person  
I saw only in part  
and it was cloudy beside other certainties

Why batter at the door of faith  
or demand other sons and daughters

they will come

Mothers cry  
*return to me the high sleep of his head*

What gap have we fallen into  
a moment when everything seems to stop  
and then start again

Our way here from sleep was not long  
we passed the hard earth  
of nearby darknesses vanquished

going so as not to debilitate others

But it passes  
the indecision

Do not dispute what you feel

honour the fear  
that will turn other ways

Across the shadow of the first relative

first I will and you will be second

Others near  
are become people  
with late and serious eyes

shaved and with gentle voices

Why not say of these

Rise up  
relieve us of our infinite troubles all undead

§

In open places see how many become luminous  
with the sign of victory crowned  
while grace acquires in the sky

Beautiful citadel  
of high walls, defended around

fire will enter me  
and shake the birds from the sky

Save inside how quiet

to adore  
the certainty of God

## Small-Water

where gaunt  
haunts thin trees late-clothed and opening.

I've been half so long ago in mussel-dark's  
brine-cold blue-black hit to the face.

Heads bow our light to the eyes  
as wind-push remakes the struggling rain.

I tumble back through windows of air  
turned to Styrofoam.

nothing basalt can erode  
worn in bones and stones, unwanted all.

## The Closed Spaces

will it always  
come down to two men fighting? First with enormous weapons  
then grunting hand to hand. *Two Figures in the Grass*,  
a Francis Bacon painting. Fighting or fucking? It's hard  
to tell the difference. I look back at the Amy Sillman essay  
on diagrams (I am at the chess club in the church hall).  
Around me it's the end game. All looks hopeless.  
The white king avoids the corner, avoids the closed spaces,  
avoids his opponent, until the distant past, with its random  
and excessive elements, resurfaces in the form of a knight  
relentless, bloodied and with intermittent flares.