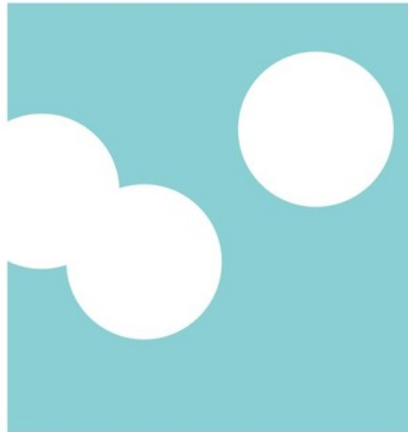


the weather



LISA ROBERTSON

The Weather

Lisa Robertson

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The Weather

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The Weather Lisa Robertson

Poetry. New work by the best-selling author of XECLOGUE and DEBBIE: AN EPIC. "Consider that we need to drink deeply from convention under faithfully lighthearted circumstances in order to integrate the weather, boredom utopic, with waking life. By 'integrate' we mean: to arc into a space without surface as if it were an inhabitable, flickering event. And by 'convention' we refer to our impropriety infiltration of the long citations of grooming, intimacy, and prognostication. Like flags or vanes, we signify an incommensurability. No elegance is self-sufficient. No-one is old enough to die or to love. The weather is a stretchy, elaborate, delicate trapeze, an abstract and intact conveyance to the genuine future which is also now. Mount its silky rope in ancient makeup and polished muscle to know the idea of tempo as real" - from the Introduction by Lisa Robertson.

The Weather Details

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Author : Lisa Robertson

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From Reader Review The Weather for online ebook

DCW says

"That's / right; disgust is fatal."

"It's a fine flowing haze; we don't / know light. It's a tear-jerker; we practice in attics. It's / almost horizontal, we seem to go into words. It's an out- / cropping of cumulus; we are a sum of inescapable condi- / tions [...]"

"To language; rain. To rain, building. Think of this stric- / ture so that the vernaculars of causation quicken. [...]"

"Each leaf a runnel the / roofs now skiffs in green / I've never done anything / but begin."

Years ago I was at a reading during the this book's tour and it remains one of my favourites in Canadian poetry.

This book mines old journals tracking the weather when this was a gentlemanly pastime, long before professional weathermen.

It uses the vernacular from those journals and attaches their repetition and rhythm to observations on personal politics, sex, life in nature, and all the other everyday distractions in our lives. The rhythm of weather watching exposes the sheer beauty of grey day tedium (and the numbing tedium of aesthetic beauty). Brilliant work.

Julia says

so! good! i will admit i am bad at books of poetry, will always freely admit it. my tradition of late has been to gravitate to the same few books of poetry at the co-op, sometimes riffle through them, often just look at them, check they're still there, stare a bit, move on. these latter three actions indicate a deeper relationship with the book, weirdly, than the riffing. the riffing is an acquaintance. after reading debbie: an epic, lisa robertson in general and the weather and the men in particular came in for this treatment (my principals, currently: alice notley; bernadette mayer; maureen mclane). was torn between the two for a while when it came to use my about-to-expire credit—i was charmed by the way my poetry prof who taught debbie fondly referred to the men as "the green book," but as a fan of The Weather i had to buy The Weather and lisa robertson understands the glimmering monotony of The Weather, she gets it. the iterations with very small differences that come across very visually, surprisingly vividly—so gradual the tiny shifts do feel like a change in climate—along with such a pleasurable (!) rigorous (readings lately = finding lovely combinations of rigor and pleasure, pleasure that is tied to, arises from rigor) oral rhythm that early on reminded me a little of alice oswald...i read each day the night before it was to come, like a forecast. the last two weekends, one of the weekends i started this, the city was beset by thunderstorms; i wasn't expecting the storm at the end of the book, a transition into scattered flashing form.

Em Laurent says

that prose.

Joe says

pairs well with Rob Fitterman's *Sprawl* as a language sourcing project and b/c in the 18th C the shopping mall was the sky / ok that was a bullshit sentence . "tuesday" crushed me.

M.L. Rio says

This is one of those poetry collections that just feels like a word collage--like the poet is pulling nouns and adjectives out of a hat and pasting them together with random conjunctions that don't actually lend them any meaning. It's possible I'm just the wrong audience for this, but frankly I finished it wondering whether it was poetry or just nonsense cleverly disguised as poetry.

k says

It's not like I understand this book, really, but it's interesting to me on a language level---I got excited about phrases, in this way that makes me more inspired to write. Like here's one I wrote on the library receipt: "we pour the word-built world"--isn't that nice? I wish I understood this book better.

Lou Last says

Monday

First all belief is paradise. So pliable a medium. A time not very long. A transparency caused. A conveyance of rupture. A subtle transport. Scant and rare. Deep in the opulent morning, blissful regions, hard and slender. Scarce and scant. Quotidian and temperate. Begin afresh in the realms of the atmosphere, that encompasses the solid earth, the terraqueous globe that soars and sings, elevated and flimsy. Bright and hot. Flesh and hue. Our skies are inventions, durations, discoveries, quotas, forgeries, fine and grand. Fine and grand. Fresh and bright. Heavenly and bright. The day pours out space, a light red roominess, bright and fresh. Bright and oft. Bright and fresh. Sparkling and wet. Clamour and tint. We range the spacious fields, a battlement trick and fast. Bright and silver. Ribbons and failings. To and fro. Fine and grand. The sky is complicated and flawed and we're up there in it, floating near the apricot frill, the bias swoop, near the sullen bloated part that dissolves to silver the next instant bronze but nothing that meaningful, a breach of greeny-blue, a syllable, we're all across the swathe of fleece laid out, the fraying rope, the copper beech behind the aluminum catalpa that has saved the entire spring for this flight, the tops of these a part of the sky, the light wind flipping up the white undersides of leaves, heaven afresh, the brushed part behind, the tumbling. So to the heavenly rustling. Just stiff with ambition we range the spacious trees in earnest desire sure and dear.

Brisk and west. Streaky and massed. Changing and appearing. First and last. This was made from Europe, formed from Europe, rant and roar. Fine and grand. Fresh and bright. Crested and turbid. Silver and bright. This was spoken as it came to us, to celebrate and tint, distinct and designed. Sure and dear. Fully designed. Dear afresh. So free to the showing. What we praise we believe, we fully believe. Very fine. Belief thin and pure and clear to the title. Very beautiful. Belief lovely and elegant and fair for the footing. Very brisk. Belief lively and quick and strong by the bursting. Very bright. Belief clear and witty and famous in impulse. Very stormy. Belief violent and open and raging from privation. Very fine. Belief intransigent after pursuit. Very hot. Belief lustful and eager and curious before beauty. Very bright. Belief intending afresh. So calmly and clearly. Just stiff with leaf sure and dear and appearing and last. With lust clear and scarce and appearing and last and afresh.

*

and says

this book reads like a fog machine,

Joe says

I'm falling in love with this book; I never want to leave this atmosphere. If you do not see me you'll find me with/in the weather.

"But the history of the atmosphere is recklessly slow."(intro/THE OFFICE FOR SOFT ARCHITECTURE)

The weather is the visible spinning of our world, it is the motion and thus the time we experience. Long before prayer bells there was weather, day and night, light and cloud and dark. These relationships have shaped us, we are not nocturnal in general. Our lives are shaped by the weather of our geographies and our geographies reflect the weather. Our history, indefinitely our weather, is recklessly slow.

"Dear Reader - a lady speaking to humans from the motion of her own mind is always multiple. Enough of the least. We want to be believed."(TOFSA)

Curious this gender orientation. Mother natureishness? Inevitably anyone speaking to humans from the motion of her own mind is always multiple. But this is the atmosphere right? The weather as the language for climate. The word as formal unit of English. Then, as noted in her essay, clouds are the formal moments of climate language. See our current hurricanes, tornadoes in California. There is no longer an ability for minimalism when our construction of this experience seeks the circumference of the globe, we must sprawl, "We want to be believed."

"Some of us light a cigarette"(63).

More of this multiplicity into singularity, this shift of one to many. Many to one. By isolating the moments of weather we lose the context of its experience. This language, these poems are our moment: stratus of prose block, cirrus of lineation, clear skies btwn. Cigarettes make clouds of smoke, this moment condenses the plural group into individual, individual action releases smoke into the air; we are liable for the weather.

"We speak as if / in you alone"(60.)

The collective sense of generalities becomes "Joe the Plumber." Why is this significant? In the continual deflection to "that guy over there" the lack of collective responsibility, the lack of unity through continual fractions eliminates a sense of whole, of weather. We need to understand all the parts in conjunction with each other, the atmosphere fills the gaps between our skyscrapers, not just the parts in and of themselves.

"Body of cloud of work. Where can a lady reside. Next the / earth and almost of our reach. Almost always electrified. / To surfaces of discontinuity. In light clothes and coloured / shoes. By the little flower called the pansy. O little bird / extravagant. Among its decayed houses. Against intoler-/able justice of betterment"(59).

The flowers, birds, the architecture, the poem, the phatic. The surface the decay of interior and exterior the minute extravagance, the cause for movement forward. This seems to unify the ecology of the poem together, align it with the poetic, tie it to our speaker as individual and as representative of the collective. All of these moments converge here, how she says in Sincerity that the weather is "briefly phatic." It the message most concerned with being a message. The text of the sky, we read down it, through it, as into tomorrow.

Carrie Lorig says

lit up 5 star duh? robertson is already making what i want to do so big and split and possible. it's a micro / macro scopic diorama made of felt and bone and building. sentences clean and precise and filled with filthy depth and care. astounding.

Troy says

I'm not sure what I think about this.

Lisa Robertson is trying to do something new, and I just don't have the apparatus to 'get' it. I let it wash over me; let her language roll and repeat and do weird things with words, sentences, paragraphs. Sometimes it's wonderful, beautiful, or she would use weird turns of word like

Read my heart: I enjoy
as I renounce the chic glint
which politics give to style

Phrases double, twist, doppelganger til they pop like bloated ticks.

The days, which are "narcotic and cosmetic" and which "each distribute a space" along with the weather flowing paragraphs of funneling cascading turns; her poetry weird and oblique, punctuated by scenes that are more understandable, almost a reprieve from her style of block paragraph flow.

Anyway... beautiful. Strange. Not sure if I love it.

Patrick Bella Gone says

In her introduction, Lisa Robertson describes the weather as "boredom utopic," an ever-present entity to relish or blame depending on the season or amount of cloud. Weather is language's default conversation topic, a way to facilitate or ease out of discussion, placeholder as well as binding commonality. Robertson combines the languages of cloud cover and quotidian existence in seven sections, each titled with a day of the week, another nod to weather's relationship to mundanity. The "Wednesday" section enacts this pairing directly: a clause about the weather and an aphoristic meditation share the same sentence, adjoined with a semicolon. "A dull mist comes rolling from the west; this is our imaginary adulthood." "A very wet day for it; we loathe and repeat and suckle our sentimentality." This tactic reveals a symbiotic bond, parallel but inextricably related paths, or even a call-and-response relationship.

For each day of the week, Robertson sets a new pattern in motion. In "Tuesday," she repeats the phrase "Days heap upon us" countless times, each time followed by "Where is Christine?" or "Where is Jane?" She answers the question indirectly then gives a sentence about cloud cover: "All cloudy except a narrow opening at the top of the sky. All cloudy. All cloudy. All cloudy," then repeat, the action of "Days heap upon us" enacted by the repetition of the phrase. And these sentences about cloud cover stress comparison ("Same as the last but darker at the top than the bottom"), each day compared to last, with barely noticeable change. And the names are particular, but they change too, Jane to Mary to Ti-Grace to Gloria to Shulamith. On first read, these names signified to me only a passage of time, faces changing, people around us different on different days, faces conflating. Then I looked up Shulamith, and realized Robertson is referencing Shulamith Firestone, notable Canadian-born feminist. So then "Gloria" is Gloria Steinem. "Ti-Grace" must be Ti-Grace Atkinson. Feminist figures from the mid/late 20th century. Days and clouds become unstoppable forces burying the efforts of these women, a change in the weather, but nothing of note.

Nicholas Cummins says

This is one of my all-time favorite books of poetry. The structure of the book is in seven long-form poems, one for each day of the week, with smaller and more traditional poems between each one. The long poems certainly have allegory, meaning and a strong feminist undercurrent but their presentation is largely as "language poems," poems where the sound, pace, and form of the words is of higher importance than the explicit meaning of each phrase. Robertson draws from the sound, pace and meter of the BBC's late night commercial shipping weather reports, which use a droning, flat monotone and particular jargon mixed in with directions, coordinates and times in a relaxed, technical dirge that sort of washes over you as you listen. These poems echo that form and are at their best when she chooses to repeat phrases, over and over again with slight differences until the words become sounds and the meaning becomes one of both uncertainty and sincerity. Highly recommend reading it aloud.

Melissa says

"Dear Reader -- a lady speaking to humans from the motion of her own mind is always multiple. Enough of the least. We want to be believed."

"First all belief is paradise."

This book felt procedural, like a linguistic experiment, like most of the time I have no idea why these words are here, in this order, rather than any others. Occasionally there are amazing sentences and surprising strings of syntax -- that did happen. And there's an originality, an authenticity. But most of the time I just felt: ugh, somebody's project.

Seven Walks, however, I have loved.

Elizabeth says

Robertson spent a hunk of time in Cambridge and ended up spending a lot of time in the archives looking at "gentlement meteorologists' " accounts of the weather. When weather was becoming a quantifiable thing. One interview states that all the language here is lifted (I think this is true only of the prose hunks....). The book is structured as a seven-day engagement with weather through language. Each "day" is a prose poem that is very language based and a more traditionally lineated poem that's more clear syntactically. As an experience, it's a wonderful sinking-into-language. Does it evoke weather? Does it question what Robertson wants to question: the idea of the expression of sincerity? I think those are the interesting questions the book raises. What is the rhetoric of sincerity?
