Kirsten Evenson

Midterm Self Evaluation #3  
Word Count: 512

**ANIMISM**

Trust

Attention

Sweat, blood and tears

Poetry

Relationship

Rain, salamanders, and quasars

Trust and attention are the base. Relationship is the container you cook it all in. Season with blood, sweat and tears but not too much. Make sure the poetry is organic, or else it won’t mean anything. The rain, salamandars and quasars are in it, whether you like it or not.

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Dear Kyrsten,

I spend all my time trying to comprehend words, but sometimes at the coffee shop I’ll catch myself watching the clouds move across the sky so slowly that if you aren’t tracking closely you won’t notice that they’re moving at all. I think I am learning something from the clouds but as soon as I try to articulate what it is, it loses its power. It is something like when I’m in my house looking out at the trees, and I am present in my body, not reaching for the past or the future in my mind, then I can feel the trees awake too. They turn to look at me and I look back. I learn something from those exchanges, but I think they do too. What are the clouds learning from me? Relationships are reciprocity. The world is here for our taking, but we are here for their taking too.

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**RECIPE FOR AN ILC**

Two parts capitalism

Three parts overwhelm

One part work well done

Enough hope, love and joy to keep it all together

Mix well. Don't let capitalism and overwhelm dominate the flavors.

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Dear Kyrsten,

The other night I found a snail traveling across the window of the open skylight over my bed. I lifted her gently off the glass and held her small face up to mine. She waved her eye stalks at me. I think we had a moment. I wondered to her aloud, “What am I doing?” She didn’t have an answer, but her determination to get back to the dirt was palpable. I set her down outside under the cedar tree and remembered once how a tree asked me why I was running around so frantically? There is much to be learned from planting yourself in one spot.

For class, we were asked to consider this section from The Lives of Animals in relation to our projects.

“Do you really believe, Mother, that poetry classes are going to close down the slaughterhouses?

“No.”

“Then why do it? You said that you were tired of clever talk about animals, proving by syllogism that they do or do not have souls. But isn’t poetry just another kind of clever talk: admiring the muscles of the big cats in verse? Wasn’t your point about talk that it changes nothing?”

Later in the same conversation, Elizabeth says, “John, I don’t know what I want to do. I just don’t want to sit silent.”

Poetry might not close down the slaughterhouses, but could it change something on a deeper level? Could language used in a different way lead to a world without the need for slaughterhouses? Can language come from embodiment, rather than the physical world being altered to match a certain kind of consciousness?

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**RAINFOREST CREATURE**

One part curiosity

Four parts grief

Take a human. Plant them in the soil in the rainforest. Leave them there to rage and cry for the darkest seasons of the year. They will want to come out. They will want to go back to a world of light and order. They will see the small creatures and bacteria of the underworld coming for them, and they will feel terror. Leave them there. We all must face the darkness.