

IF MY INTERLOCUTOR WERE MY JUDGE

Elizabeth Robinson

I remind the scales that their undertaking is to balance,
and what one side holds, the other may differ from entirely,
only that their weight is the same.

Yet it is not so,
because the weight of difference itself is absolute,
averse to our appraisal.

What is damned in this measure, then, is assertion
where neither weight nor balance would stay it.

The mechanism beholds itself, preordained by its degree.
Unsteady.

Never was a tool so rightly insubordinate to
the knowledge that would
claim it.

Knowledge, not self-transcending, but mere measure.

**IF MY INTERLOCUTOR WERE GRACE
(SEWING AND SPINNING)**

Elizabeth Robinson

When the winter is treacherous and we are lost,
we do not grieve as we would prefer, but we
work.

Loss stitches the garments.

Fact is allegory of itself.

The yarn is spun at its own center and then knit together.

Dread grace

shows the willing hand its labor.

All the raveling, down to the smallest part,

furl and twist about,

stubborn knowledge: its spirit as surely in the air

and the air also absent of parts.

IF MY INTERLOCUTOR WERE FAITH (MIDWIVING)

Elizabeth Robinson

Can we have faith in the master who knows that the baby
exists but cannot
coax it from the womb?

A cup cannot be enough evidence of its content.

There is another eye given to see the overflow,
and a hand

that cradles the head as it is born from the gut
of its mother, the hand
gladly stained with its birthing blood.

I have seen over and over one body given by
another, enough

to know what faith is: like the water that cannot
hold shape without the curve of its cup,
transparent.

Issuing forth from its exhausted mother. Too innocent. The formless baby.