Cotton Clouds

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COTTON CLOUDS
わたぐも
by
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A creative thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado
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This thesis entitled:  
Cotton Clouds 
written by Naomi Tsukamoto 
has been approved for the Department of Art & Art History

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Date Nov 12 2004

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

HRC protocol #__________
In Japanese, a cotton cloud suggests a child. In Japanese art, clouds create space that is in-between reality and dreams. My thesis is pages in a book. You can start from anywhere. You can rearrange in any ways. Enjoy.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY
ARTIST STATEMENT

For if we think of this existence of the individual as a larger or smaller room, it appears evident that most people learn to know only a corner of their room, a place by the window, a strip of floor on which they walk up and down.
- Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letter to a Young Poet”

Life is mysterious. It is filled with unknowns. There are a lot of “questions” that tempt us to ask “why.” But once we answer the “questions” there is no more mystery – that is the end. “Mystery” is something unsolvable, something that makes us want to not figure it out.
- Chiyoshi Omata, “Journey Through One Hundred Years of Memory”

All we must do is situate ourselves within the being we are dealing with, instead of looking at it from the outside – or, what amounts to the same thing, what we have to do is to put it back into the fabric of our life.
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty “The Visible and the Invisible”

When we have forgotten all our habits of scientific objectivity, we look for the images of the first time.
- Gaston Bachelard, “The Poetics of Space”
A corner of my room, a place by the window, a shadow underneath... My stories always begin here, looking and listening, paying attention to the smallest details of life, trying to thread together what does not make sense, saving all my wonderings. Having lived outside my native country for so long, I focus on my experiences that never quite add up or something missing. I approach art in the same manner, always responding to where I am at a given moment.

I am interested in the memories of places, physical memories that are no longer tangible, and the remnants that are the markers and the keepsakes of our memories. I tell stories of my childhood; all the childhood mysteries, wonderments, and make-believes that were once my reality. I grew up surrounded by things that were unexplainable. My childhood best friend did not speak. But he sang stories all day long, writing down random numbers. My neighbor boy was sent away to another school one day because he stopped growing. I felt different growing up, too. I grew up surrounded by many American things that my parents brought back from the United States. They lived and worked in Denver, Colorado, where I was conceived. I played with American toys, sometimes wearing American little girl dresses. I was born and raised in Japan.

I know a beach where all the sand is star-shaped. In Japan, spirits and streets gods are everywhere still today. I still wonder why my goldfish always
tried to jump out of the aquarium, why my cat sang to the flying sparrows. For all my wonderings, I never looked for the answers, but instead, I filled in the blanks of my stories with wishes and imaginations.

We live in a culture with a set of norms and understanding. I live in-between two cultures with two sets of them or even more. My current work deals with this idea of life in-between: in-between time, place, reality and dreams. My stories are our reconstructed memories.

I see my art-making as my process of unknowing. It is my attempt for a dialogue, asking the audience to look without naming.
INSTALLATION, "UTATANE – DAYDREAMS"

"Time, story, and life" can be reworded as "memory, discovery, and creation." Memory is not a collection of facts. Memory fades over time, and what connects the bits and pieces left is your imagination, or images you prefer. That also means the "creation of memory," to create a new story which did not exist before, leading to the discovery of yourself through finding the story.

- Akira Minagawa, fashion designer

The story never stops beginning or ending. It appears headless and bottomless for it is built on differences.... The story circulates like a gift; an empty gift which anybody can lay claim to by filling it to taste, yet can never truly possess. A gift built on multiplicity. One that stays inexhaustible within its own limits. Its departures and arrivals. Its quietness.

- Trinh T. Minh-ha, film maker
Events in our lives occur in places, but what we can take with us once the time passes are remnants, not the actual experience; physical memories, not the actual place. There are always discrepancies between what we remember and how it actually was. The sizes of the objects in our memories change, so do the colors and the forms. We are constantly choosing what to remember, filling in the blanks in order to tell our stories. In this process of retelling, time no longer exists; time becomes irrelevant.

I spent the last month of this past summer driving around Denver, collecting used items that triggered my memories of childhood. My parents lived in Denver before I was born. I looked for items that looked familiar, that took me back to my childhood. This feeling of familiarity, whenever I encountered the “right” items, overwhelmed my entire body. Even though they were not mine, the objects told stories, and the stories circulated in me like déjà vu. Some of the objects that I collected were broken or had parts missing.

In my installation, I am interested in capturing an inner landscape that exists between time, space, reality and dreams. It is a landscape of our memory. Memories exist fragmentally and radially. My installation is like a book that has been randomly opened. The narrative has no beginning or ending. The images are the keys that connect and reconnect. They recur like our dreams, like daydreams.
RECOLLECT: CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Memory works radially, that is to say with an enormous number of associations all leading to the same event.
- Susan Sontag from John Berger “About Looking”

Time as it flows, is so much time wasted and nothing can even truly be possessed saved under the aspect of eternity which is also the aspect of art...yes, art because it gives the past a form, saves it from change and disintegration.

The past – A quickened sense of the drama of nature is diverse moods and the added sense of detail of common place experiences evoking something elusive (but real) of the past which made the present alive with a significance more than sensuous enjoyment of spectacle (scenery, people, etc) feeling that a particular moment of the past was transmuting the present with an unnamed but significant touch (a lyrical feeling although there was the ever lessening strain of morbid obsession with the past – a thing from childhood never outgrown).

- Joseph Cornell, “Vision of Spiritual Order”
(I feel that our daily life gets stripped away as we get older, and all that is left at the end is its skeleton. This process is like climbing up a colorful jungle gym. We keep climbing looking for the right color, the right size, and the shape. But I wonder, when we get to the tops of our jungle gyms, will we see the same views that we saw when we were a little child?)

Somebody asked me once why I make works about my childhood. She questioned why nostalgia becomes so popular and precious. I don’t remember my childhood being romantic or wonderful. Rather, it was awkward and mysterious. But what I remember the most is just a plain sensation of being amazed and amused, all the wonderments.

A contemporary Japanese artist, Yoshitomo Nara, in an interview, once said, “I go back and forth my childhood and the present in order to assure my sense of feelings; scared, happy, or the sky is beautiful. I have kept working in this manner for so long now. I feel that I am getting closer to my present self.”

I, too, create to make sense out of this world. I had not made works about
childhood, or rather, the child's worldview, until I came to Boulder for my graduate studies. Being a foreigner and a minority in Boulder turned out to be more difficult than in any other places that I have lived in the United States. Many people I encountered had strong stereotypes and preconceptions about Japanese people and Asians in general. I felt displaced. I felt out of place.

In his book, "The Poetics of Space," Gaston Bachelard writes,

And after we are in the new house, when memories of other places we have lived in come back to us, we travel to the land of Motionless Childhood, motionless the way all Immemorial things are... We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection (pp. 5-6).

My current works deal with childhood in order for myself to assure a sense of place. I choose my memories to recapture the feelings of wonderments in order to save and share all the mysteries.
A boy with a blue shirt

#1
There was a picture hung in my room
at my childhood home. It was
a picture of a girl
with a blue dress.

I had a similar dress growing up
I remember. It was
a navy dress however, and I did not
have the pretty pink shoes that this girl
had. I did not
have the blonde straight hair,
instead,
I had dark, dark
curls.

“We used to have a picture of a boy
that was a twin of this picture”
my mother used to tell me.
“We must have misplaced him
when we moved back
from America.”

From America,
my family came home
before I was born.

I grew up wearing dresses from America,
playing with my brother’s toys from America.

#2
Driving in Denver,
I took the wrong turn
and found myself in a park
I recognized
the park. I knew
this was the park in our
family album.
This was the park where my
brother played.

Driving,
I found
the picture of the little boy.

The same sky

Sometimes,
the sky is blue. Some times,
it is gray.
I watch children paint the sky
blue, purple, green, and yellow,
and I wonder
if it is at all the same.
Is the pink elephant still the pink?
Is the blue bird pale.

Sometimes
the sky cries.
We forget the sky and wonder
If it is at all
all there.

But at night,
we sleep.
And it is still the same sky
that we look up

and dream.
Goldfish in a baby crib

I always thought they had such sad eyes.
And somebody told me
that they will never survive
outside in the nature, outside
their small fish bowls.
They would lose their bright,
bright colors.

There is a goldfish in my doctor’s office,
those white, white
translucent ones with a big
red bump on their foreheads.
They look like
a headlight, but leading here to
nowhere,
I thought,
I always thought.

One day,
she looked at me, and my doctor said,
“She is Lucky the III.”
One day, his first Lucky jumped
out the fish tank.

My doctor wasn’t there, but the
cleaning lady caught her,
finding her on the ground
gasping
for the air.

She survived, and that’s why she is
“Lucky,” my doctor said.

I wanted to tell her stories,
Just like the old days when animals
were the storytellers.
I wondered how
could she survive
outside the baby crib,
that we created as her dwelling place.

One day,

she will look at me again,
and jump
out the window

and swim
up to the sky higher and higher
and become a set of small stars.

And some day,
a little girl will hear the story
from her father:

“So the story goes…”
ABSENCE

What is essential is invisible to the eye,” the little prince repeated, so that he would be sure to remember.
- Antoine de Saint-Exupery, “Le Petit Prince”

The shading is not an additional superficial coloring.
- Gaston Bachelard, “The Poetics of Space”

What will the friendly old lamp think of you, during the lonely winter nights? What will the other objects think of you, the ones that were so kind, so fraternally kind to you? Was not their obscure fate closely united with your own?... Motionless, mute things never forget; melancholy and despised as they are, we confide in them that which is humblest and least suspected in the depths of ourselves.
- O. V. de Milosz, “L’amoureuse Initiation”
There was a house at the corner from the first-turn right, walking from my parents’ house in Japan. She was a big house, 2-story high, with a big yard, fenced, a front door nailed with scraps of wood, abandoned.

This house in my hometown lost her owner long time ago. I was five when I first noticed this abandoned house across the street from my home. It stood there quietly for another ten years or so after that until the area we lived became extremely popular due to the location right by the beach. People decided to build a summer home and apartments there squeezing them all in the land where this house was once stood.

I used to imagine as a child about this house in my neighborhood. There was a baby doll at her balcony. So I thought they must have had a baby. She had a child’s bike at the front porch, and I thought the child must have been around my age. The adults told me this family fled one night. I wonder what happened to this family.

I was explaining my work to my mother using this house as an example. I am interested in the abandoned objects. I cannot help, but imagine the owner and the object’s secret life that we can no longer see evidently. I am also interested in the fragments and partial views in the same way, like how the artist, Rachel Whiteread solidified space casting the negative space of objects. There is a
mystery in missing parts.

In my culture, we believe that the spirits of the owners get transferred to each object even after the objects have been passed on to somebody else. Sometimes, the new owners decide to perform cleansing ceremonies on the used items because of that. At the end of every year, there are special funeral ceremonies for abandoned dolls.

I imagine the stories behind whenever I make an object. Sometimes, I feel that what is not tangible is more important just like a shadow is not merely a shape. It directs us to a discovery; it tells a story.

I think of creating an installation as writing a poem. You never want to say too much. You want to save the mysteries, leaving them up to the audience to decide the course of the stories, trusting them to fill in the blanks with their imaginations and experiences. All I need to prepare is main ingredients with a hint of scent, just like Bachelard Gaston exclaims, “I’ve already said too much. If I said more, the reader, back in his own room, would not open that unique wardrobe, with its unique smell, which is the signature of intimacy” (pp.13-14).
First Loss

Yesterday,
I felt you in the wind.
I never knew
that you became the air,
the air that protected everything.

Waiting for you wasn’t always hard
because I knew,
someday, you would come back.

When you left me,
I was too small,
too small to understand
the meaning of death,
the meaning of life, and
the meaning of the three white doves.

There were too many questions to be answered,
there was too little that I could understand.
I just tried to erase you from my memory because I was afraid,
so afraid that you would have to come back for me.

Remembering your stories,
I was always waiting for you,
wondering what happened to the flower girl,
where you found the great train.

What once was lost

#1
And you
disappeared
without a trace.
And I
thought and thought,
thinking
what could I have done
differently.

But sometimes,

the silence.

#2
At night,
this butterfly becomes
a star

in the day.

#3
There you were.
It was too dark and I
couldn’t see you.
It was too busy and I
couldn’t hear you.
But you were
here
all
this time.

#4
All
I remember
was a cat
sitting
telling me
what I left behind,
staring
at
me.

* ねこがいたのを憶えています。
ちょっとすわって
こちらを見てました。
忘れものを伝えるため、
じっと
こちらを見てました。

A little rainy day

One day, right before the sunset,
I took a wrong turn during my walk
and came across a vacant lot.
On the side of the parking a lot, there was
an old playground.
Unused, parts were broken, there were
two swings without sheets.

It was a little rainy day.
KEEPSAKES

Plato’s Parmenides

Parmenides: I mean such things as hair, mud, dirt, or anything else which is vile and paltry; would you suppose that each of these has an idea distinct from the actual objects with which we come into contact, or not?

Certainly not, said Socrates; visible things like these are such as they appear to us, and I am afraid that there would be an absurdity in assuming any idea of them although I sometimes get disturbed, and begin to think that there is nothing without idea, but then again, when I have taken up this position, I run away, because I am afraid that I may fall into a bottomless pit of nonsense, and perish.

Yes, Socrates, said Parmenides; that is because you are still young. The time will come, if I am not mistaken, when philosophy will have a firmer grasp of you, and then you will not despise even the meanest things.

With what joy you changed yourself into an old shoe, picked out of the gutter, saved from being swept out with the rubbish.

- O. V. de Milosz, “L’amoureuse Initiation”

Socrates explains, “it is not much use possessing one of them if they are at liberty, for they will walk off like runaway slaves; but when fastened, they are of great value, for they are really beautiful works of art. Now this is an illustration of the nature of true opinions: while they abide with us they are beautiful and fruitful, but they run away out of the human soul, and do not remain long, and therefore they are not of much value unless they are fastened by the tie of the cause; and this fastening of them, friend Meno, is recollection, as has been already agreed by us.”


Memory implies a certain act of redemption. What is remembered has been saved from nothingness. What is forgotten has been abandoned.

- Susan Sontag from John Berger, “About Looking”
There is a tower up on the hilly mountain by my hometown where you can look down on the whole surrounding area from the top. When I was a child, my family used to go hiking there every season to see the flowers blossoming, to see the greens, and to see the color of the leaves change. You could climb all the way to the roof of the tower. The roof is fenced all the way around with tall tree branches and leaves sometimes peaking in through the fences, but most of the fence is covered with old keys. My childhood friends had a farewell party for me there, on the roof, when I was first leaving my native country to come to this country. They explained to me that people tied the keys and left there as keepsakes for long-lasting relationships. The keys will keep our memories safe.

I have always been a big collector. My oldest collection starts with letters that I received from my childhood best girlfriend who lived 3 minutes away from my home. We started writing to each other in kindergarten, and we wrote each other for 12 years or so after that. I had another friend in elementary school with whom I exchanged drawing scrolls for about 3 years. I put all the scrolls in small glass bottles. They are still there in a box inside the closet at my parents’ home, next to another glass bottle in which colorful glass shards lay. I collected these glass shards from my hometown beach. They had all the edges rounded, traveling through the deep Pacific Ocean. They looked like gemstones, and it took me a
while to realize what they were as a young child. Even my artworks became a collection in elementary school. Because of the tragic loss of my first cat in a train accident, I became obsessed with turning all my school art projects into my second cat's portrays. Still today, in the large drawer under my bed at my parents' home lie a cat's musical box, a small cat shelf, and a small cat cabinet. Now, I realize that my collections were the stand-ins for the important memories and stories of my life.

After I became an artist, I started collecting art materials, which actually started long ago in elementary school, too. Some of what fills my room still today, the fabric, the yarn, the thread, and the buttons, were already in my possession over 20 years ago. I also have a large collection of paper and envelops. They connect me to my families and friends. They are my keepsakes.

In mid-80s, the artist, Ilya Kabakov put together a large collection of garbage and called it, "The Man Who Never Through Anything Away." He defined "garbage," and talked about how they can have a sentimental value. They remind us of particular events in our lives that are personally important to us.

Perhaps, my treasures are garbage in another person's eyes.
One day, the shooting star

Lying on our backs
we looked up the sky.
The sky was low,
the air, crisp and pale.
The stars kept falling down
descending onto us
like the media shower,
like the snowfall in the dusk.

I remember the story of the fox,
mother and a child,
in the snow,
in the star dust
ascending.
The mother, looking back,
looking after her child,
always her eyes following
the small body behind,
walks up the hill
toward the cave,
their home,
toward the misty crescent moon.

The midnight blue,
the sky,
was like a cape,
a cloak that hides us.
the star is the doorways
leading
to where?

We are all wanderers, she said.
We are wanderers.
Our stories
are moments,
disappearing moments.

They are the keepsakes that ties us here for the moments little longer,

a little longer.
Bird inside an envelope

Don’t forget
to turn off the light
of your sky inside. Don’t forget
your birds inside the envelops.

They are
the messengers – they will
sing when you
open the envelops
to put the words inside.
These are words for somebody special.

The bird will sing
quietly
when you seal each envelope.
That is
the promise
of a messenger.

So don’t
forget
to turn the light of your sky
for your birds.
They will rest
and fly away

at the dawn
into the morning sky.
RAIN & WISHES

Suddenly this dream you are having matches everyone's dream, and the result is the world.
- William Stafford, "You Must Revise Your Life"
“Oh, I could actually just take a train and go home.” I woke myself up so many times thinking that in the middle of the night since I came to this country. I feel that wishes are repetitious. They come back to me over and over again in my dreams, in my daily life.

In my culture, we make wishes all the time. We are very accustomed to this practice of wish making, and they do often require repetitious activities. For example, when somebody gets sick, we fold 1000 paper cranes, stringing them together in long ways, and place them by the person’s bedside. Annually, we wake up early to see the first sunrise of the year, wishing for another good year. After the sunrise, we pay a visit to a local shrine and make a wish at the altar. Sometimes we draw fortunes there. Sometimes, we write wishes on a wooden plate, which has an image of the animal of the year on the Chinese Zodiac printed on one side. And don’t forget, if you get a bad fortune, all you need to do is to tie the fortune onto a branch. We say, higher you tie it, there is a better chance that the bad fortune will go away.

When I first saw Annette Messager’s birds (from the series, “Borders at Rest”), I felt very close to them. She compares the making of this work with the process of child play, but what attracted me the most to this work was its protective sense, her care and wishes toward these small birds.
There are two types of wish making ideas that I often work with in my art. One is about what I miss. The other is about animal life in human environment.

I have had cats as my pets all my life so far, and naturally, they all brought home little gifts. Sometimes they were small birds like sparrows, sometimes, the lizards, the crickets, the goldfish, and the mice. I experienced so many sparrows getting cold in my hand growing up. Growing up, I developed a very strong sense of protection toward these small creatures. Still today, these animals come back into my life over and over again as a part of my artworks. I place them in a safe place. I put something soft underneath them and around them to keep them warm. The process of deciding the placement of things does have a strong reference to a child play just like Messager described. There are certain orders in how things are placed. But these are orders that adults do not recognize. The animals that I create appear dead, but are decorated just like how child play often involves cruelty in fantasy.

For the missing parts, I started making works about rain after I came to Boulder. We have had droughts during the last couple of years here. I missed rain and my experiences surrounding the rain. In Japanese, sora shiranu ame, the rain that does not know the sky, means tear.
Collecting Rain

When I was a child,
I used to look up the sky
with my mouth open
on rainy days.
The rain
tasted like candies,
very colorful in blues and yellows.

Today,
I still look up the sky
and there is the same sky,
the same rain, the colorful candies.

But when I shift my eyes for a moment,
suddenly it all disappears.
But still in my pocket, there is

a candy.

She ends each of her poems with the word “Fear”

And she asks,
“So do you like it?”
We exchange smiles and I
tell her
how much
I admire.

She stares me and reads
another poem for me.

She opens
her red cover book
and writes
"I
poetry
beautiful."

She shows me a drawing and reads, 
"a beautiful mermaid"
swimming
in the waves of words.

A beautiful girl herself writes
poems in code.

A beautiful girl,
like all the young girls,
falls in love and repeats,

"Fear."

A man called sparrow

In the midst of anonymity
on this street,
I met
an anonymous man
whose name is forgotten
merged into the shadow.

He stands on this street,
wakes down looking up
the roofs
looking after wounded sparrows.
An anonymous man
who once was a well-known
writer
now lives on this street
taking
the lost birds back
to their home.

A magic pocket

I dream for
a pocket.

Patting it gives you
anything,
a magic pocket.

Once my mom told me,
a true story.

Still
the magic pocket
I dream for.
DAYDREAMS: THE MINIATURE

From Gaston Bachelard, "The poetics of Space"
The house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace.

The fact is not enough, the dream is at work.

The tiny things we imagine simply take us back to childhood, to familiarity with toys and the reality of toys.

But we haven't time, in this world of ours, to love things and see them at close range, in the plentitude of their smallness.

From Susan Stewart, "On Longing"
That the world of things can open itself to reveal a secret life – indeed, to reveal a set of actions and hence a narrativity and history outside the given field of perception – is a constant daydream that the miniature presents. This is the daydream of the microscope: the daydream of life inside life, of significance multiplied infinitely within significance.

The reduction in scale which the miniature presents skews the time and space relations of the everyday life world, and as an object consumed, the miniature finds its "use value" transformed into the infinite time of reverie.

Miniature time transcends the duration of everyday life in such a way as to create an interior temporality of the subject.

In its tableau like form, the miniature is a world of arrested time; its stillness emphasizes the activity that is outside its borders. And this effect is reciprocal, for once we attend to the miniature world, the outside world stops and is lost to us. In this it resembles other fantasy structures; the return form Oz, or Narnia, or even sleep.

The miniature, linked to nostalgic versions of childhood and history, presents a diminutive, and thereby manipulatable, version of experience, a version which is domesticated and protected from contamination.
I had a dream one night. I don’t remember when I had this dream or where I had this dream. All I remember is that I was still a child when I had this dream. The dream goes like this. I see a small house, a house in the size of a large doll house. I see my parents in the house having a dinner conversation. I see my brother. I see myself, but I know that is not me. I try to reach out, but then I realize, I am too big for this house.

One day, a little boy came by to my studio and started gazing through the objects that were occupying my studio. I listened carefully to his conversation with him mother, and what I found most fascinating was that he noticed the smallest objects in the space, whereas, his mother kept pointing out the larger scale objects. He said, “Do you see the little chair?” His mother answered, “The one over there?” He said, “No the little one inside the box.”

Gaston Bachelard discusses miniatures in his book, “The Poetics of Space” and states, “It gives him back the enlarging gaze of a child” (pp. 155). The miniature to me is the embodiment of the child’s gaze, which makes what we called the reality bigger than the real life. The miniature objects also create a space where we cannot reach. But this is a space that we all once lived in as a child and have lost over time as we grew up. It is a familiar space.

I put Magritte as my reference for this section because he, too, created the
world that we all understand despite its surreal qualities because we were all once children.

For my thesis project, I focused on the childhood memories and miniature objects cherishing the child’s gaze, the ability to dream.
Angel on my spoon

There is a small angel living on my spoon. This tiny ceramic spoon was given to me when I was a baby with a tiny bowl and a tiny plate. The spoon had tiny paintings inside of two-leave sprouts and tiny flowers.

One day, I was playing outside with my spoon on my hands. -- Suddenly I came to a land of small green plants and leaves.

And when I sat down, there was an angel.

A Half Broken Piano

#1
There is a small organ at my grandparents’ house. “I used to play this to sing,” my mother told me.

She used to tell me all about how she wanted to learn to play the piano, but how she never got a chance.
I started taking piano lessons
when I was three.

#2
I still remember
my first piano lesson.

My mother took me to this
old lady's house
near our old apartment,
our small, old apartment.

I remember how the room was dark
as we walked in. Everything
was dark, dimly lit except

the black shiny piano.

I remember being very scared,
scared of her, the old lady,
as I played a song called
"Tulip."
She had
very old hands,
very wrinkled hands,
and her breath
smelled stale.

She was an old lady,
short and dark,
with a dark dress,
and no

face.
#3
I liked the man
who came to tune my piano
once a year
to our new home,
our white new house with picket
fence.

My cat
liked him too.

He always wanted me to try out the piano
as he tuned.
He always
wore a brown work
suit.

I was in college.

#4
I used to believe
that
small birds lived
inside the piano,
inside
my piano.

When you have a broken key,
you want to take her out,
I mean,
the bird,
and rest it
inside a small white
box.
Make sure you put something soft underneath, my mother used to tell me all the time.

My cat caught small sparrows all the time. So I put them inside small boxes.

Make sure you put something soft underneath because you never know, they might come back alive again.

They are your melody, your broken keys inside the small boxes.

#5
I used to wonder why my grandparents kept the small organ because it no longer played.

My mother had many, many birds.
(THE PROCESS)

We are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost.

It therefore makes sense from our standpoint of a philosophy of literature and poetry to say that we “write a room,” “read a room,” or “read a house.” Thus, very quickly, at the very first word, at the first poetic overture, the reader who is “reading a room” leaves off reading and starts to think of some place in his own past. You would like to interest the reader in yourself, whereas you have unlocked a door to daydreaming.

- Gaston Bachelard “The Poetics of Space”
I read “The poetics of Space” by Gaston Bachelard over the summer and was especially fascinated by his comparison between the recollections of the past with the poetry. “We are never real historians,” he said. “We write a room.”

As a poet myself, I really wanted to embrace this idea of memory being the poetry and the daydreams. That is why I organized the thesis in different sections with my poems embedded in it. And sure enough, putting up this installation was just like writing a poem.
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