

PROLOGUE

Seeing Red: A Pedagogy of Parallax is a scholarly work written in the form of an epistolary *bildungsroman*—a didactic novel of personal developmental journeying. It shares the possibilities of how artful research informs processes of scholarly inquiry and honours the reader's multi-perspective as integral to the research project's transformative potential. *Parallax* is the apparent change of location of an object against a background due to a change in observer position or perspective shift. The concept of parallax encourages researchers and teachers to acknowledge and value the power of their own and their readers' and students' shifting subjectivities and situatedness which directly influence the constructs of perception, interpretation, and learning. This work makes three claims:

- that the sharing of stories encourages reflexive inquiries in ethical self-consciousness, enlarges paradigms of the "normative," and develops pedagogical practices of liberation and acceptance of diversity;
- that form determines possibilities for content and function thus the use of an alternate format can significantly open new spaces for inquiry; and,
- that transformational learning may be significantly deepened

in pedagogical practice through the intentional development of *embodied aesthetic wholeness* and of eros in the dynamic space between teacher and learner. Embodied aesthetic wholeness attends to teaching and learning holistically through the body with consideration to: increasing receptivity and openness to learning; fostering skills of relationality; modeling wholeness-in-process in explicit reflexive texts; layering multiple strategies of inquiry, research experiences, and presentation; and acknowledging ecological and intuitive resonances.

FOREWORD CONVERSATIONS

Dr. Carl Leggo
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Poetry of Love & Love of Poetry

In *Seeing Red* Pauline Sameshima exemplifies what Paulo Freire calls “aesthetic curiosity” (p. 95) and “epistemological curiosity” (p. 97). She writes about love, romance, desire, passion, eros, and hope—the familiar dynamics that animate the tangled relationships lived every day by teachers and learners in and out of classrooms. Pauline holds fast to the exhilaration and the danger of love, as well as the integral necessity of acknowledging love in all our relationships. Her convictions resonate with bell hooks who claims that “to open our hearts more fully to love’s power and grace we must dare to acknowledge how little we know of love in both theory and practice” (xxix). hooks is concerned that because we have been “taught to believe that the mind, not the heart, is the seat of learning, many of us believe that to speak of love with any emotional intensity means we will be perceived as weak and irrational” (xxvii). Like hooks, Pauline questions love

with a scholar's vigorous rigor, and she lives love with a poet's steadfast commitment to the vitality and veracity of language, and she dreams love with an artist's inimitable imagination.

Seeing Red is a love story, a story of desire and intrigue and mystery, a story of teaching and learning, a story that sears the heart with a seer's prophetic vision. With unsettling insight, Pauline understands how research in the social sciences must begin with stories that help readers revisit and revision their understanding of the fabric of daily lives. In the novel *Straight Man* by Richard Russo, the narrator is William Henry Devereaux, Jr., chair of the English department at West Central Pennsylvania University. Devereaux observes: "Despite having endured endless faculty meetings, I can't remember the last time anyone changed his (or her!) mind as a result of reasoned discourse. Anyone who observed us would conclude the purpose of all academic discussion was to provide the grounds for becoming further entrenched in our original positions" (p. 201). Pauline is a wise scholar, and she engages in "reasoned discourse" with stiletto sharp precision, but her wisdom extends to an appreciation of the limits of "reasoned discourse," and so she acknowledges how other ways of knowing—artistic, poetic, narrative, autobiographical, artographic, creative, emotional, imaginative—are also integral to scholarly adventures of researching and living.

In my scholarly and creative journeys with Pauline, I have learned to live with more courage, more conviction, more constancy. I have been a language teacher all my adult life. And for most of my adult life I have also been a poet. I claim that I live in language, and that language lives in me. I am awash in language, espoused and exposed in language. While others are busy running the country, and selling real estate, and diagnosing illness, and constructing

the latest popular culture fad, and making millions in wheeling and dealing, I teach and write poetry. I am a promoter, proponent, prophet, and pedagogue of language. But for all my daily and life-long devotion to language, I must still make a confession. I live in fear. All the time. I am afraid of upsetting others. I am afraid of offending others. I am afraid of insults and criticism and rejection. Above all, I am afraid of truth. I am a language educator, and still I am afraid of speaking and writing truth. I tell lies all the time. I am a language educator and I am afraid of language, afraid of the uncontrollable, untameable, wild energy of language. I need to attend to Betsy Warland's wisdom:

i believe writing we value is writing which springs from necessity. the necessity to speak the unspoken, the taboo of our lives. if we do not, we BETRAY: 'trans-, over + dare, to give' ourselves over, turn ourselves in, become agents of our own absence. (1990 p. 30).

Pauline teaches me to be less frightened of the "boo" in "taboo," to "speak the unspoken," to know that research and education are always about seeking truth (especially in fiction) in order to avoid betraying ourselves. In *Seeing Red* Pauline teaches me about love, in love, how to love. So, my preface is a love note to her, offered with eager gratefulness.

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Teacher Red

The importance of *Seeing Red* for teacher education is that it challenges teachers to think differently about their interactions with the world. Teachers' interactions are represented and mediated by the pedagogical stances they adopt. Such stances are ever-present and constantly changing, sometimes imperceptibly and at other times dramatically. *Seeing Red* takes the reader beyond boundaries typically acknowledged within education. It invites one to think differently, more expansively, about how one is complicit in the world of teaching and learning. As such, the story is deliberately provocative. *Seeing Red* causes a quick intake of breath akin to plunging into the cold waters of an ocean on a hot summer's day. The undercurrents of the story swirl about and buffet the reader as the story unfolds. Julia's letters summon participation. Her perspectives have the potential to inform, alter, and change one's view of teaching and learning and the pedagogical stance that one adopts in educational contexts. *Seeing Red* defines a new way of thinking about scholarship. It presents "the possibilities and potential of artful research" (p. 283). It is, simply, a/r/tographic in every sense of the word: artist, researcher, and teacher.

Scholarly projects like *Seeing Red* require courage, stamina, and imagination. As such, *Seeing Red* is exemplary and groundbreaking. The rigor with which *Seeing Red* was formulated, undertaken, and presented is not readily obvious when first read. However, the attention to detail, the judicious choices made, and the strong

narrative thread become evident when one considers the impact that the project has on one's sensibilities. The beauty of *Seeing Red* is its ability to invite conversation (and argument) as much as it is to provide an alternative way of thinking about educational scholarship.

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Dr. J. Gary Knowles

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Finding Voice, Finding Form

How did Pauline come to find the heart of this work – the story of Julia and her academic supervisor – amid the routines of working in schools and with young children? How did she find her way through the labyrinth of places called classrooms and schools and universities where conformity rules the day, day after day? How did she come to this work amid the busyness of family and work? How did she learn not to conform to the pressures of traditional inquiry and the templates of scholarship?

As a man living in the world of the academy the concept of form is important in my life. My interests in form permeate my thinking about the natural world, the atmosphere, the built environment, the places I dwell, the clothes I wear, that which I choose to read. I have some sense as to how I came to think this way. Working in architecture taught me an enduring principle (passé in some circles), simple in its articulation, powerful in its influence. Form follows function. I know this in my heart.

But how did Pauline come to break out of the mold? What is the source for her vision about the possibilities of how scholarship

may be presented, read, and felt? And read and re-read? *Seeing Red*? How did she come to find form in the epistolary novel? What is the source of her authority? (I do not mean authority as in expert but, rather, her authorial voice.) These are just some of the questions that floated in my consciousness when I first picked up *Seeing Red – A Pedagogy of Parallax* – and turned its pages. These pages revealed the power and simplicity of letters written and sent (and unsent) to tell an untold story with conviction and creativity. The heart of the matter is the emotional strings that letters create.

Seeing Red reminds me of the many ways that form plays out in creative scholarship informed by the arts and envisioned by artists. Pauline uses letters to provide a structure to the work. Yet they are also the genre or medium of the piece. The letters give the work a certain appearance and there is comfort in their irregular regularity. I (and I imagine most readers) know and experience letters, even if they be more of the electronic kind than I prefer. I have a sense of what to expect of them yet they are bound to provide surprising twists and turns. As such they possess a certain aesthetic but, as I say that, I am also reminded of their potency as method. Exchanges between persons in relation have a rhythm and a cadence and a structure and vocabulary that aids in making sense of the relational world they represent. The letters were, I imagine, at first only a possibility for revealing her scholarship; but the letters unfolded as Pauline explored the relational heart of *Seeing Red*.

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Embrace the Freedom to Create

I had the privilege of teaching Pauline in her first PhD curriculum course. At that time, Pauline was an exceptional classroom teacher. Now she is an exceptional scholar who has brought the aesthetics of her work into the very lifeblood of her writing and discourse. She has been transformed and her dissertation is a testament to the depth and range of her change. Her dissertation is an exemplar of currere as complicit curriculum conversation. It is pedagogy of parallax because it exemplifies conversations for understanding through multiple layers of perception. This perception underscores an embodied aesthetic wholeness – an a/r/tographic way of being in the world that penetrates our senses and reaches into our depths and causes us to question our own perceptions. As readers we are changed. Pauline, as an a/r/tographer, was inspired by her art forms and her pedagogy, as she pursued her inquiry and gave full attention toward her heart, mind, body, and spirit. As a result, she examined difficult concepts in sensitive, compassionate yet demanding ways.

It seems an epistolary foreword should echo the value of the characters and relationships in the epistolary novel. And so I invite you to be equally involved in the creation of this text. Pauline Sameshima writes an epistolary bildungsroman, a didactic novel of personal journeying through artful scholarly inquiry. Parallax is a play on perspective, shifting perceptions and interpretations. If you enter into this experience with an open mind, an imaginative spirit, and a reflexive gaze, you too will enter into a space of

personal artful yet scholarly inquiry. Embrace the aesthetics of this incredible text and you may be transported to, or transformed by, new ideas and identities. Several years ago I wrote an article with several students of mine. It was a couple of years before the word *a/r/tography* would be coined but the concept was very much developed. In that group of women I found myself exploring this concept: ‘as I create I am created’ (Irwin et. al. 2001). To me this is another example of the pedagogy of parallax. As we perform, paint, write music or poetry or fiction, we are conveying complex ideas and often these ideas are the complex parts of ourselves we are coming to understand as we are creating. In the doing, in the creating, we are becoming. We are transforming ourselves. In reading this volume, I urge you to embrace the freedom to create and re-create this text – to share in the creation of this text. You may come to understand, or create, another side of yourself. It will be a joyful and profound experience.

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PREFACE

Living in the Amber: Conversations between Red and Greene

I am sitting with Maxine Greene, in my dream.

She sits at a small round metal table. The air is damp and grey but I do not feel the chill even though my hair keeps blowing across my cheek, irritatingly sticking to my lipstick, reminding me of my unsettledness even in joy. The cobblestone street makes the flimsy table wobble when she decisively taps her cigarette in a staccato movement on the glass ashtray centered on the table. We are smoking with gloved fingers, legs crossed, crimson lipstick stained on our filters, perfectly natural in another era, a different context. I see the smoke but cannot smell it and wonder if the haze in front of her eyes is just my own breath blurring my vision. I imagine her eyes are green but this is my fiction. We're sipping something thick and almost syrupy but it bites my throat with an echoing the way her words are electrifying my synapses—strangely fast, yet smooth and warm, gliding knowingness and recognition into my capillaries and spreading through my emptiness. I feel myself in the limen, teetering on the edge, uncomfortable in the brink but

filled with desire to stay. I feel in love, engulfed in the anticipated moment of realization, in the love of desire to learn, knowing the space before me is all open.

Greene (2006) writes in a prologue titled “From Jagged Landscapes to Possibility”:

the crucial demand of our time is to attend, to pay heed. . . . To speak of dialogue is to suggest multiple relationships, multiple perspectives. There must be a connectedness among persons, each with a sense of agency, each with a project. And there must be a capacity to imagine, to think of things as if they could be otherwise. . . . Thoughtfulness, imagination, encounters with the arts and sciences from the grounds of lived life: this is the beginning and the opening to what might be. . . . There must be an ability to anticipate and accept incompleteness. Even when a controversy appears to be resolved, gaps and spaces remain, and the need for open questions. And where there is a space, a gap, there is the possibility of new choices, renewed reflection.

This is my curriculum. This is my hope, that my work can render points along an unseen path; to chart the roads of the unsaid; to begin to map a rhizomatic research; to speak the iterations for those without words; to broaden the margins; to search for alternate forms which open spaces; and to share an agency that slowly iterates what is, pervading, in a stable diffusion with strength in integrity, a hope that holds love and sees joy in all the truths we live.

I use techniques and thought processes of symbolic interaction as Norman Denzin (2002, p. 255) describes:

The process of writing was a process of self-construction and then reconstruction. This process was based on ongoing

conversations with myself and with memories from my past. These memories were reconstructed through an interior dialogue [and] a meaningful reality was created out of this interpretive process.

Carl Leggo (2002, p. 2) describes his living as:

desire, insatiable desire
to know, to quest/ion, to seek.
So, I explore ways of writing
that expose lies like vermilion threads
tangled in the illusion of a linear composition

To introduce the work I share a few of the questions which guided its development:

How does personal identity influence pedagogy?

- How do misconceptions of rootedness, sense-of-place, and constructs of belonging frame teacher identity in unhealthy ascetic motivations which promote precarious pedagogical perspectives and punitive standardization?

How are body, love, and desire connected to public conceptions of learning and teaching?

- How can a new embodied aesthetic of personal and plural "wholeness" merge culturally constructed unconscious and dichotomous ways of thinking about pedagogy which inherently separate, define, and prevent holistic learning and teaching?
- What influence does the student/teacher relationship have on student learning? What is the edge of love? Where is the limen of learning?

How does form influence and shape thinking?

- How does Julia separate her learning (private) from her living (public)? If the researcher believes that the ultimate goal of research is to articulate and improve the current contexts of learning, how can the researcher both honour private learning and remain responsible to the public audience in the presentation of research?
- How does the external frame set around particular notions of thinking and representation affect the possibilities of the content and its interpretation?

I am disrupted by language
invaded by dreams
punctured by love
bleeding for the silenced
scribbling down
the moment
all to construct
now

Pauline Sameshima
2007

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*gratitude, thankfulness,
appreciation, pleasure, and joy
I am indebted*

to more than I can mention here

*some do not know their influence
nor perhaps do I yet recognize their guidance*

these I know

*my husband Michael is patient, kind, a shape shifter filling
the cracks of my living and materializing dreams in the miasma
my children Madison and Cameo make me know love as lips and skin
my mother Dorothy is creative, energized, and loves beyond limits
my father Kee is innovative, handy, generous, and loves to a fault
my mother-in-law Margaret loves and nourishes my family with time
my mentor Carl knows no edge of love, filled with poetic mystery
my mentor Tony lets no stone rest, loves with attention to the moment
my mentor Rita lovingly paints the stars in the night sky to guide me
my mentor Gary prunes, feeds, and waters, tending with love
my peers love in laughter, warmth, and sojourning
the journey of learning
this life, this book*

is love



Our strategy should be not only to confront empire but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness—and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe. The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling—their ideas, their version of history, their wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability.

Arundhati Roy, 2003, p. 103



THE CRITICAL PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Critical personal narratives are counternarratives, testimonies, autoethnographies, performance text, stories, and accounts that disrupt and disturb discourse by exposing the complexities and contradictions that exist under official history (Mutua & Swadener, 2004). The critical personal narrative is a central genre of contemporary decolonizing writing. As a creative analytic practice, it is used to criticize “prevailing structures and relationships of power and inequity in a relational context” (p. 16). . . . The utopian counternarrative offers hope, showing others how to engage in actions that decolonize, heal, and transform. . . . The critical democratic storytelling imagination is pedagogical. As a form of instruction, it helps persons think critically, historically, and sociologically. It exposes the pedagogies of oppression that produce injustice (see Freire, 2001, p. 54). It contributes to a reflective ethical self-consciousness. It gives people a language and a set of pedagogical practices that turn oppression into freedom, despair into hope, hatred into love, doubt into trust.

Norman Denzin, 2005, pp. 946-948



SEEING RED

A Pedagogy
of Parallax



EDITOR'S NOTE

*i must search
i must write
must express all
construct myself understanding*

Julia disappeared in May 2005. My obsession to share the collected letters and recovered documents of Julia Quan's unfinished dissertation has consumed me for a number of years. My body hears her calling me, to look deeper and more closely through the layers in her letters which I believe explain what happened to her.

Let me enlighten. In 2010, in the third year of my PhD program in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of British Columbia, as a research assistant for the celebrated Dr. Cliff Conrad, I was asked to gather data on recent North American and international PhD dissertations which incorporated innovative forms of qualitative research. UBC was and is a progressive leader in promoting and celebrating alternative ways of knowing and representing learning. This is how I stumbled onto a number of

publications and conference proceedings written by Julia Quan on her in-progress epistolary novel dissertation—a first for that style. I was intrigued by her work, her mind, and her mystery.

Julia was last seen in May 2005 at the First International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Urbana, Illinois. In 2010 I tentatively approached Luke, Julia’s husband, with the proposal of going through Julia’s incomplete dissertation with the hopes of editing and possibly creating a collected works of sorts. I gratefully acknowledge all the assistance Luke gave me in putting this collection together. I was struck by his notion that through me Julia was being brought back to life.

Most intriguing of the data collected were the two discs which were password protected. I am continually surprised at how the inaccessible and visually “absent” can be so inviting. One was a Maxell brand disc labeled “Seasons,” the same brand as all the other discs, and the other was a Sony brand disc labeled “Julia.” I was only able to access the files on the Maxell disc. The password was simply “empress.” I understood Julia’s fascination with pretty, iconoclastic, romantic words so I started with fairytale vocabulary. The disc contained five folders: Spring, Summer, Late Summer, Fall, and Winter. These files contained letters to Red dated March 2004 to March 2005.

By comparing a couple of the letters against letters which were published, I realized that this version was definitely an early rough draft. The letters were shocking and raw in their devoted attention to theorizing teaching in the classroom, remembered stories, love and desire, art-making, and the pedagogical significance of her in-love experience with Red, one of her dissertation committee advisors. The work did not look like fiction, yet there were instances where Julia referred to the reader suggesting that very

early on she knew she was going to publish the letters. The compilations simply looked like emails in chronological order. The dates were sporadic so I'm not sure if emails on missing dates were deleted or if there were no correspondence on those days. I doubt the latter considering Julia's prolific style. I was surprised to find sometimes 10 emails to Red on a single day! Her collection reminded me of Anne Carson's discussion of the Greek myth of Stesichoros. Carson said "the history of text is like a long caress." It appeared:

that Stesichoros had composed a substantial narrative poem then ripped it to pieces and buried the pieces in a box with some song lyrics and lecture notes and scraps of meat. The fragment numbers tell you roughly how the pieces fell out of the box. You can of course keep shaking the box. (1998, pp. 6-7)

Thus, I share these fragments with you in the hopes that you can divine a story that makes sense to you. Or perhaps this whole exercise of publishing these letters is an example of my notion of what curriculum means. Here is one of my favourite images:

Understanding curriculum as deconstructed text acknowledges knowledge as preeminently historical. Here, however, history is not understood as only ideologically constructed, rather as a series of narratives superimposed upon each other, interlaced among each other, layers of story merged and separated like colors in a Jackson Pollock painting. . . . To understand curriculum as deconstructed (and deconstructing) text is to tell stories that never end, stories in which the listener, the "narratee," may become a character or indeed the narrator, in which all structure is provisional, momentary, a collection of twinkling stars in a firmament of flux. (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 449)

I was not able to track down any of the three advisors on Julia's committee. Winnie Crates retired in 2005 to a remote island off the coast of Australia. Will McCarthy was on extended sabbatical, and Jared Zeno had moved to Tulane University in Florida before Hurricane Katrina. I realized that the files I had were not the actual dissertation because the letters were unformatted and according to the timeline set out in her dissertation proposal, her first full draft was due soon after she returned from the Illinois Conference. I have left the letters in the same chronological order but for practical purposes, could not print all the letters. I also tried to clarify some points Julia had left in draft form. Last, a few of the letters have been significantly revised for style and content for this publication. The letters theorize conceptions of the teacher/student relationship, identity, love, desire, belonging, feminist perspectives, canonized myth, and the power of presentation and form to shape learning, understanding, and constitutive cultural knowledge.

This text you are reading, *Seeing Red*, is thus Julia's selected and edited letters and her dissertation proposal which was intentionally written as the Epilogue. I name this a postmodern fictional memoir because it is not even clear to me what is based on experience, what is invented in Julia's original text, or exactly what I have inferred in my inclusions and deletions. Perhaps I just don't want the text in the letters to sit still. In some strange way, I feel that I will come to understand her mystery if I keep the words in the letters moving—articulating her and carrying on her story. Pinar explains this movement through deconstruction for the sake of construction. Pinar says, "Autobiography takes this task [of deconstruction] seriously, as it is the task of self formation, deformation, learning, and unlearning" (1988, p. 27). He explains that:

one way to keep moving is to understand that the stories

we tell, however provisional, always exclude other stories, which may also be true. . . . We are not the stories we tell as much as we are the modes of relation to others our stories imply, modes of relation implied by what we delete as much as what we include. (p. 28)

Pinar goes on to say that in seeking to find the included and excluded we may be able, as Nietzsche said, “to experience the history of humanity as a whole as [our own] history” (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 494).

Although many question how autobiographic Julia's letters are and how ethical it is for me to publish this work, Luke gives full consent for the publication. Luke knew that Julia was writing an epistolary love story for her dissertation. He is adamant that Julia's love for him was always true, that the letters were all fictionally constructed, and that the work was a testament to Julia's imaginative writing and deep urge to present innovative research in accessible forms. He said Julia would have been proud to know her work reached beyond academic borders—that was her goal.

This collection is not only Julia's story of Red, of love, of desire, but of belief that “theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice” (Hwu, 1993, p. 198). Through contemporary autobiography, poetry, and a/r/tographic practice (see Irwin, 2004) layered with arts-informed inquiry (see Cole & Knowles, 2001b), Julia uses relational entanglements between her living and scholarly studies to inform pedagogical practice. Her letters themselves are the intended “teacher,” interactively (by way of ambiguity and openness to interpretation) walking the reader through a year of learning in love through the passage of curriculum itself (see Daignault, 1988).

Through her letters, Julia reveals the inner life of an artist, researcher, and teacher in her movement through thought in her passage of becoming. Through writing, Julia carries herself through the joy and danger Neilsen (1998) speaks about, reinventing herself toward new identities.

I admit, I am obsessed with Julia, who she was, is, and who I want her to become, as if she will suddenly materialize when I come to really understand what her letters are trying to convey. The love theme is strongly connected to the idea of Amelia Jones' process of *reversibility* whereby:

The relation to the self, the relation to the world, the relation to the other, all are constituted through a reversibility of seeing and being seen, perceiving and being perceived, and this entails a reciprocity and contingency for the subject(s) in the world. (1998, p. 41)

Julia writes of her love for Red while concurrently being loved by others. She lives in a space of feeling “going out” and simultaneously acknowledging the “coming in” of others’ feelings. When she is disappointed in Red, she takes on the disappointment she simultaneously causes for those who love her, intensifying and exaggerating her disappointment in Red and thus creating a distorted view of Red. Key characters entangled in her letters include her husband-Luke; daughters-Jade and Savannah; dissertation committee advisors-Winifred Crates, Will McCarthy, and Jared Zeno; Red’s partner-Clare; and a beginning teacher-Chris.

I am obsessed with this “recursive process translating thought to language, building the knowing on the known” (Neilsen, 1998, p. 40). This search “to engage in the deliberate structure of the web of meaning” (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 100) has consumed me. I have learned much already from the way Julia renders her work. I see

her texts unfolding, carrying me along in their wake. Maybe this is the plan—that in my search of her, I find myself. Perhaps together we can fabricate our own truths.

Georgia Lang
April 15, 2015