

Jameson O'Hara Laurens

Some Were Exiled

For Neal

As a child it was the club foot, the way he walked on the
land
heavy, like he belonged.

And once exiled, he hanger-wire ricocheted the streets,
for to flee is to be human, uprooted from land, padded
by others & humming.

Some were up and sent to these same cities: told: *you
belong, you belong
surrounded by, well that is to say, other freaks like you.*

Some were pulled there: shoe strings dangling, clumped
earth dropping
Sprinting with hanging laces & nowhere to push past the
soil.

Then one day, the scrawny one who ran ragged & got ill
weary of being high & loved who he loved
Sent a postcard in which he was dressed in the field as a
flag.

Returned to say he *is home on the range* & calls himself
outstanding. He will reclaim what it is to reclaim,

in to a place that is not (yet) his home (Jacobs ladder,
false indigo)
and wrapped in indigo & ivory, head to toe

as if swaddled— no, prophetic— and outstands,

outstands:

waits for shoelaces & all the external, extraneous & feelers to burrow down.

Back as a flag he will drift & bounce off the fence, tie himself to the wheat: this is my land, this is your

fearless. Becomes shepherd, rock climber, field hand.

Dear Mother, Dear Father, I have arrived as Yours Truly. Sovereignty.

Back in the city, creeping phlox struts across parking lots.

Who are you, Indigo, but Jack-in-the-pulpit? He ticks: *No*. I am yarrow.

I am the plant (of healing). Crush my leaves on your palms

&Smelt me into your scratches.

Jameson O'Hara Laurens lives and teaches in Brooklyn, New York. Her book *Medaeum* won the Ping Pong Chapbook Award in 2016. Other recent work has appeared in *Enclave*, *One*, *the FEM*, *Curlew Quarterly*, and *Alexandria Quarterly*. She collaborates with artists in other media, and takes writing advice from her son, and a cat named Rhyme.