

Text by Amaya Guzman after John Baldessari's "READ/WRITE/THINK/DREAM"

Read, Write, Think, Dream

After John Baldessari

I skip through life, gripping the arms of strangers and skimming my palm across the metal railings as I venture through the world. As I move, I wait for the thump of my cane against any barrier that may crash into my body. Daring to stop me on my journey.

Thump

Thump

Thump

I've always wondered what it would be like if I hadn't lost my vision as a child.

How bright would the rainbow be as it reflected into my eyes?

When I write, the strokes of ink would absorb into the paper, creating tangible dreams through the indentations the lines create.

I was never able to learn how to read and the thought of staring at a page as a story unfolded is baffling to imagine.

When I am alone, after everyone has gone home, I walk around the house dreaming that I am in a library. I stroke the rough covers of every book on my shelf and pretend I have read them all.

The thick binding groans as I open the book and devour the words with my eyes. The floor creaks as I step across the hardwood, watching my foot rise and fall with every step.

*I am clumsy in this world, but not blind.*

I fall and as I fall I can see a blur of the mahogany couch as my hands rush to meet the ground. The air shifts to make room for my tumbling body. The book I held in my hand crashes into the smooth chestnut floor, the words flying off of the book as if breaking free from imprisonment.

*I wish I could break free as well.*

I bought paint the other day. After I was done with my make-believe world I asked the neighbor to help me order some.

He asks me what colors I want and I respond that I want the color of the breeze brushing against my cheek as it moves through the sky, the heat of the sun on my hatless head and the roughness of the earth between my fingers.

He is confused.

I can hear pity in the caves of his voice, echoing from his mouth to my eardrums.

The strange girl from next door is letting her imagination get ahead of herself again he probably says to himself.

He probably doesn't know that we are married in my dream world. In that world he stares into my pale blue eyes and falls in love at first sight. He tells me they change colors in different light.

Miniscule changes in hues only he would ever notice.

I tell him I want blue, yellow and green before he begins to think I am strange.

I spent the next night throwing paint around my house. Brushes streaked with the sound of waves colliding with the shore, flying across the room like seagulls in the ocean breeze. The sun landed on my ceiling and I reached for it in hopes my fingertips could see what my eyes couldn't.

I fall asleep in a puddle of colorless moisture. My fingers melt into the sticky remains of my art as I sink into a grave of my own creation. As I liquefy, I ooze into the living room of the neighbor below me. Seeping into her couch, I overtake her home. I have never met this woman, yet we are similar, her and I. It's as though we are living in glass panels side by side, underneath and above.

My neighbor enters her home, yet makes no indication that she can see me. She lays on my remains, covered in my goo, she consumes me. Together, we are translucent matter.

Watching the world pass us by as people walk through our life in constant revolving doors.

As the night passes on, I rise back into my home, vacuumed into the crevices of her ceiling and back into my own glass box.

The smell of fresh paint swarms my nostrils, dancing along my nose hairs as if in harmony with the rhythm of the colors.

I lay once again in the thick, wet, substance of paint from the previous night.

I created art last night. I floated to the roof and down the halls. I painted my eyes with poppies and squished them so deep into my brain that I was forced to see them. I read and I wrote and they were more than thoughts and dreams. They were so real I tasted the salt in the ocean on the tip of my tongue. It was real. I could see.