

## Looks

*Sy sjocht as in brette ûle yn de tange*

Those looks that can't be classified.

No typology, no phases of the moon  
can explain them.

A look that travels through the circus rings  
of scalp and shoulders and triangle  
of trapezius, that crinks the bowel,  
that has the rider adrenal  
gland kicking the kidney.

*The look of an owl  
roasting in the tongs.*

A look Rembrandt in the Frick flings you,  
self-portraiture a criss-cross of straining lines  
in befeater and fur and red sash and ochre,  
face-framing the empty cave of his eyes.

Alyda Faber

## The ones you believe

*Alle geasten moat men net leauwe*

*Don't believe all spirits*  
just the ones

whose white hot teeth  
afflict your spine

so you cannot  
sit stand run

you burn cold

love's temperature  
this time round.

Alyda Faber

## Grace unwitting

*Dér't de hún zyn sturt leit, is it skjín fage*

If God writes  
with a child-thick marker...

Note this—bones  
in sockets rotating, inner folds  
digesting, electrical  
fields balancing, vast interior  
surfaces thrumming on—

but on *our* surface  
so much debit accounting—  
ink gauged  
lines measured  
exact, one thin-skinned tit  
scratched on another's tat—

But note this  
*where the dog's tail lies  
the floor is swept clean.*

Alyda Faber

## Paperpants

*As mijn broeck ien pijper seck is.*

*When my pants are a paper bag* I'll use them to make lists

—  
elegant things, distressing things, and best of all, things  
that 'quicken the heart.' A famous list-maker, Shonagon,  
lady-in-waiting to Sadako, recommends this. Elegance:  
grass bending in the wind, sunlight paddling through windy  
leaves, un-armoured reply to a guns-out blazing meanness,  
kindness moored on the ancient saying, *be kind—everyone  
you see is fighting a great battle.* A quick-step heart:  
Distress: the long aftermath love like those feet  
of a death, wishing that stop and wait  
dead the undead parent, and look at a starling  
wishing alive the dead tacked to a sidewalk  
parent, the rages of an by blood leaking  
infernal father hiding from the beak its free  
love under piles of bones wing making a flap  
for a bitter game of flap flap, that staring  
hide-and-go-seek-and admission to her usually  
never-find until the well-hidden interior—*het  
ontroerde mij*—'it stirred me  
corners of the room when you....' Velásquez's  
begin to whiten out *Lady with a Fan*—her eyes  
in the psychiatrist's backlight the sternum  
three-chaired bare set the torso humming  
office, breathing a twin-engine ready  
two arm-lengths to take off—*where?*  
from clasping eyes.

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