

LOOKING AT THE UNICORN TAPESTRIES  
this one's for Anne's  
marriage to Louis  
full of trivia and  
colours stark  
thens rapidly  
unicorn's horn in  
a stream to  
up poison, nothing  
an simple as

FINGER

PRINT



here some places of  
cloth are missing  
but we know name by  
her rings (was  
was eaten by an  
spread over  
keep it from  
does Anne  
rings her  
32 and buying  
velvet to wear  
Charles dies  
already thinking  
Louis lights on  
skin where the  
and gold cloth  
Lynn

LYN

LIFSHIN

the notes say  
know his long  
but no one is  
the square  
in the  
the flags are  
Anne looks  
as if she  
people but  
that Louis  
in the  
people seem  
for the  
year now

## LOOKING AT THE UNICORN TAPESTRIES

1

this one's for anne's  
marriage to louis  
full of fruits and  
collars stags a  
hyena rabbits a  
unicorn's horn in  
a stream to suck  
up poison, nothing  
as simple as it seems

2

here some pieces of  
cloth are missing  
but we know anne by  
her rings. (was the  
rug eaten by animals  
spread over corn to  
keep it from freezing)  
does anne compare her  
rings her sleeves,  
22 and buying black  
velvet to wear when  
charles dies. is she  
already thinking of  
louis fingers on the  
skin where the blue  
and gold cloth stops

3

the notes say how we  
know his long fingers.  
but no one is sure what  
the squirrel means

4

in the fourth  
the flags are a new color.  
anne looks older suddenly  
as if she'd prefer fewer  
people but couldn't change  
that. louis gold and yellow  
in the background. the  
people seem too huge  
for the castle

5

the marriage contract  
sealed the unicorn  
caught in chains. (does  
anne dream the years  
in front of these threads,  
the beast tied to the  
pomegranate tree, the  
end and the beginning,  
the ripening fruit in  
the tree of her body

#### PULLING THE TOWER OF BABEL OUT OF DUST

out of the plains of  
old mesopotamia  
in the ruins of babylon

deep under a field of  
water men are  
reading wedge  
shaped writing

the euphrates in the  
distance sheep and  
goats grazing in the  
ruins of the palace  
ringing of sheep bells

hammurabi and nebuchadnezzar  
made love and died here  
alexander the great  
caught malaria  
and couldn't leave

the bricks were lugged away  
salt ate the stones  
the hanging gardens

deep under the earth  
now these rows of bulls  
mythical beasts scaly  
forked unicorns  
with eagle claws

standing out in relief  
from the flaking brickwork  
their glazed colors  
long since worn away

CHURCHWARDEN's ACCOUNT 1631 and 34 CHELUSFORD

to howlate for cobwebbing  
the church's corners

for carrying roger price  
out of the church  
being excommunicated

and to mrs fry for making  
the new curtains for  
altering the old ones  
with washing them

to howlate for his  
year's wages for  
looking to the boys

for 2 women for  
making the church  
clean by strewing  
rushes

to antony burgess of  
white chapel  
for catching birds

to howlate also for  
driving hogs out  
of the church  
yard to the pond

and to the mason for  
gilding the rose  
and thistle

and the ragged places in  
the claws of the lion  
and unicorn

WHO IS IT COMING BACK

the other night  
one man pulled  
me from some  
one like meat  
on sale

someone else  
said lyn youve got  
to make each  
poem each  
man matter more

as if it was  
the last one,  
dont spread  
yourself so

thin. it seemed  
strange i hadnt  
thought i was  
am i the same  
girl here 10  
years before

scared, hungry  
who is it lying  
in the grass alone  
still wanting

wondering if  
either man will  
want her tonight

and why that  
should matter so

PROGRAM

the doctor, suddenly  
he seems so  
old, hearing  
me into this  
dirty room, the  
lowells; I'm  
wondering is the  
red blood or  
orange  
And why this  
pink glass  
full of Scotch,  
his lips  
on my nipples

AFTER THE READING

the three  
at this  
workshop  
the dog  
way those  
treat  
rain the  
garage  
and  
applies  
road  
telli or  
1930

beer and  
rye, the  
what people  
say to get  
close or  
just to  
bed

that  
to  
the other's living  
to

i leaned  
toward

years you  
know  
out of  
business so  
I raised

how far away  
are the  
mountains  
he kept  
saying

the woman hardly  
moves jeans into  
a hill of  
lowells

could we  
touch them

we used to shut Saturdays  
listen he says  
a bargain  
downstairs the  
walls sweat  
50 years

FAMILY

the doctor  
grandfather  
pink  
night  
and  
singing  
the egg  
30 years  
back  
the chicken  
gross wings  
glava  
on his  
lips and  
nothing  
sleeps right

UP TO THIS POINT IT'S BEEN OK ONLY WELL NOW IT'S CONFUSING

the doctor, suddenly  
he seems so  
old, herding  
me into this  
dirty room, the  
towels: I'm  
wondering is the  
red blood or  
rouge  
And why this  
pink glass  
full of scotch,  
his lips  
on my nipples

FAMILY

at night the  
slashed cherry  
stretches roots  
deep under  
the garage

revenge on my  
grandfather  
pits will  
star his  
night

and for  
sinning with  
the egg girl  
50 years  
back

the chickenhouse  
grows wings  
claws settle  
on his  
lips and  
nothing  
sleeps right

DRY GOODS

the sign still  
says and  
sons  
but the  
oldest fell or  
jumped  
summer 1920

after that i  
didn't go so much  
to shul  
the other's living  
in california

these undershirts i got  
for 40 years you  
didn't know  
gutman's out of  
business so  
long raise he

says the woman hardly  
moves leans into  
a hill of  
levis

we used to shut saturdays  
listen he says  
a bargain

downstairs the  
walls sweat  
50 years

PHOTOGRAPH

the three  
kids in  
knickers  
the dog the  
way those  
trees still  
ruin the  
garage the  
same ferns  
apples the  
road only  
wider

the thin  
belly fat  
now the  
one kid  
dead at  
forty

FAMILY

by summer  
weeds covered the  
charred hole where  
the store burned  
to nothing, march  
just after the  
old man died  
my grandmother  
more undone by well  
i know which loss  
and she had reasons,  
all those years of  
watching car lights  
till morning  
In the fall she  
had them paint the  
rooms white sighing  
about how wood goes  
quickly too as the  
garage sank around  
his blue 53 plymouth  
It was so much  
like ritual

## PETS

yes he  
liked my  
fur my  
dresses

wanted me to  
live on his  
nest and  
write poems  
about him

what he  
said to me  
making me  
come was

like what  
i say to  
the cat

## MARRIED

not the one she  
wanted later he'd  
call her kike but  
the one who seemed  
gentle and read  
They had girls  
and moved in with  
her father then  
she stopped  
dancing He  
hardly said  
a thing  
On the way to  
the divorce he  
died and then  
she was sorry

## SARATOGA

dark counter on  
broadway early the  
morning smell of  
old wood a  
woman her tight  
lips scent of dark  
cloth nobody comes  
for the baths now  
only these  
gipsies monty  
wooly would  
sit out her  
face looks  
like it could  
crack a charred  
hole she says the  
fires losses  
there's nothing horses  
now the beauty  
gone smoke  
her mouth  
breaking  
you know  
but they  
lived then

## THESE DAYS

just fog  
cabbages  
getting blue  
things like  
yr shoes yr  
hands swirl  
by, dissolve  
I'll be so hard  
by winter if I  
don't break

carrying bags full  
of letters to no  
one saying oslo  
is beautiful

nobody in the room  
30 years the  
letters in the  
3rd person

it was the first  
time she'd talked to  
anyone they  
said when they  
came to feed her  
she laughed when  
they asked about  
her white teeth

sunday she  
couldn't get up  
from the floor

needles in her,  
the purple bruise  
spreading

later in the room,  
just an address book  
with no names

white gloves in  
tissue a rolled  
up painting called  
china dream

they said there  
comes a time when  
death is better

the 5 photographs  
had nothing on  
them but 1899

the ten year old  
girl in one  
looking somebody  
said a lot like  
the old woman

DURER

with your apples  
of sin and chaos

drawn to circassian  
slave girls, whores

but you stayed cutting  
the blocks of hard  
wood in a cold  
room in nurembourg

was it for that  
chill that adam has  
such huge leaves  
on his penis

Colorless days when  
it got dark early  
painting yourself  
as jesus

sun lute bells  
and ladies  
blurring in venice

Such long afternoons  
growing crabs loons  
knights and rabbits

wondering about  
the flood that  
would eat all men

Even your walrus  
seems uneasy

eels half a  
skinned rabbit  
on an iron hook.  
the grapes in

water blood  
drying in sun

doors close.  
rose stucco

2:40 we don't  
say anything

to the one  
other face

nothing just  
the sea

moving shadows  
of 3 girls

down the de  
chirico streets,

lerchi

ONE OF 7 DEPRESSING THINGS

thinking about how just  
writing the poem some  
times is like putting  
one that came back back  
in an envelope again,  
hoping it doesn't seem  
like a thing gone over  
too much and not wanted

nothing can stay inside  
nights like this

women, their  
hips leaning  
into metal.  
heavy air, a  
storm maybe.

steps smell of  
wet earth, beer  
Summer in the  
city the black  
girls, their  
tight asses  
geraniums, stone  
Shades slam  
down you don't  
want me because  
i remind you  
from the top  
floor, glass  
Nights like  
this whatever  
comes, comes

PULLING WHAT THERE WAS BACK:

one  
photograph  
in Maine a  
letter. I  
never could  
call you  
father or  
pa, in  
spite of  
what they  
said. Ben, who  
knows what he  
knows and  
then it's late  
(you with your little  
book of  
words too) I  
wish one of us  
hadn't been  
so quiet

Other books in press or scheduled: Moving By Touch (Coty-  
ledon Press), Museum (November Press), Mercuriochrome Sun  
Poems (Charta Press), I'd Jeannie Morgan (Morgan Press).

The Beginning of a Bibliographic Checklist for Lyn Lifshin

1. Why Is The House Dissolving? (September, 1968) Open Skull Press, 1379 Masonic Ave., San Francisco, CA 94117; 17.5 x 21.5 cm., stapled wrappers (white glossy stock with black offset lettering); 36 pp. mimeographed text; edition 500 copies. \$1.  
‡ Photo of the poet on back cover. Book printed and edited by Brown Miller; contains 35 poems.
2. Leaves and Night Things (1970) Baby John Press, P. O. Box 2293, West Lafayette, IN 47906; 13.3 x 21.0 cm., stapled wrappers (ocher matte stock with black offset lettering); 24 pp. offset text; edition 500 numbered copies. \$1.  
‡ Photo of the poet on last page of text. Book printed and edited by James Evans and John P. Miller; contains 21 poems. Inside and outside cover design by Iola J. Mills.
3. Black Apples (1971) The Crossing Press, New/Books, R.D. 3, Trumansburg, NY 14886; 15.0 x 23.0 cm., stapled wrappers (cream matte stock with black offset printing); 44 pp. offset text; edition unspecified. \$2 (rubber stamp, back cover).  
‡ Photo of the poet on last page of text. Book edited by John Gill; contains 34 poems. Cover by Larry Paciello. Text drawing by Patrick Lane. SBN 0-912278-00-5
4. lady lyn (1971) Hey Lady supplement no. 15, Morgan Press, 1819 North Oakland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202; 14.9 x 23.8 cm., stapled text, resin-glue-attached to wrappers (80 lb Avon white Kimberly cover stock with black printing on a circular white overlay, gold banding); 24 pp. letterpress text (Melior type, hand-fed Golding no. 7 press, Handschy and VanSon Ink; edition 300 numbered copies. Unpriced.  
‡ Photo of the poet inside front cover. Text contains 15 poems.
5. Tentacles, Leaves (1972) Pyramid pamphlet no. 1, Hellric Publications, 32 Waverley Street, Belmont, MA 02178; 13.7 x 21.0 cm., stapled wrappers (olive green matte stock with black offset printing); 16 pp. offset text; edition unspecified. \$1.25.  
‡ Text edited by Ottone M. Riccio. One eleven-part poem sequence (26 stanzas). SBN 0-912086-10-6

Other books in press or scheduled: Moving By Touch (Cotyledon Press), Museum (November Press), Mercurochrome Sun Poems (Charis Press), I'd Be Jeanne Moreau (Morgan Press).