

Deborah Keenan

AND SO IT WAS I ENTERED THE BROKEN WORLD

*And so it was I entered the broken world/to trace the visionary
Company of love, its voice an instant in the wind.*

Hart Crane, *The Broken Tower*

Unknown, she shook up the tracing, Left the broken tower,
Took up the tracing to discern where love was present,
Was absent. Usually the summer heat gave her just enough
Of her version of joy to do this work—but the gulf coast
Was under water, people were waving t-shirts and sheets
As flags of despair and anger, and she lost her ability
To trace—the gulf coast was under water and under siege
And the broken world seemed triumphant. The surveillance
Helicopters noted the bright and bleak flags, and one of
Every one hundred was saved. All these flags for nations
Of one, of five, or for the ragged ones left in their
Neighborhoods, unwilling to leave their sick grammas,
Their beloved dogs.

Unknown, she took up the tracing, the gulf coast washed
Out to sea, the bodies colliding with oil rigs washed to shore.
It was going to be a poem about summer, and Johnny Cash
Was singing *Bridge over Troubled Water*, and she could
Hear June's voice, wavering and powerful, climb a vine
Between his notes. It was going to be a poem about summer,
And tracing the visionary company of love, and now it
Tried to be a poem about hundreds of thousands
Of her countrymen and women losing everything. Now
She was trying to cross the bridge that Johnny Cash
Made real, and now the poem was ending—the Flaming
Lips were singing . . . *And though they were sad
They rescued everyone, they lifted up the sun . . .*
And now she was tracing again, as the poem ended,
The visionary company of love, and she was trying
To cross the bridge as the small flags waved and waved,
Faltered and waved in the summer sun.