



KING'S LEAP

Michelle Uckotter

Trap Paintings Vol. 2

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Story by Lillian Paige Walton

On her way to the mall, C saw a dog lying in the middle of the sidewalk. She screamed and ripped the airpods out of her ears.

The dog started, its tiny black eyes outlined in white.

A child came over and gestured toward the dog.

“This is my dog.”

“Oh,” said C. “I thought it was dead.”

The child’s brow furrowed.

“Have you seen a lot of dead dogs before?”

C hadn’t.

“He likes to sunbathe,” said the child, smoothing the dog’s coat. “He’s old so he doesn’t always pick the best spots. Sunny, but not—”

“Practical?”

“Yeah, not practical. It’s happened before, you know. Someone saw my dog in the road and thought that it was dead.”

C laughed.

“Did they scream like me?”

“No,” said the child, “she died immediately.”

“Oh.”

“Then someone else came by,” the child sighed sadly, “and they saw the dead lady in the middle of the road and they died too.”

“...”

“And then twins came by and they also died.”

“Hm.”

“And then more people came and died until it was just one big chain of people and people and people dying and dying and dying.” The child paused to take a breath.

“Have you ever played dominoes?”

C closed her mouth and nodded.

The child mimed toppling a strip of dominoes with a flick.

“Just like that.”

C put her hands on her hips.

“Something tells me that you are making this story up.”

“But at least it was funny, right?”

“A bit morbid,” said C.

The child stared down the road. “I’ve heard that word before. Anyway, my dog and I have to go now.”

The dog circled the child’s ankles.

“It was nice meeting you.”

C watched the child look both ways and cross the street. The black leather wings sewn to the back of the child’s sweater stirred in the breeze. They turned around.

“Why are you watching me?”

“I don’t know,” C confessed, “I don’t see people your age out by themselves often.”

The child frowned. “It’s a culture of fear isn’t it? In Japan, children of a certain age ride the trains to school by themselves. It’s intended to foster responsibility.”

This seemed more plausible to C than the story the child had previously told. “If you say so.”

Having decided she was not hungry anymore, C passed the mall and continued up the street. A dark mass lay in the center of the pavement. A dog with a sleek black coat came into view.

“I won’t fall for this one,” C muttered and bent down to greet the animal. It was rigid and unresponsive to her touch. C shoved her airpods back in and turned up the pop music full blast. She continued down the road faster than before, her purple eyes outlined in white.

– Lillian Paige Walton

Michelle Uckotter (b. 1992, Cincinnati, OH.) is an artist living and working in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include Springsteen Gallery (Baltimore, MD), and A.D. Gallery (New York, NY). Recent group exhibitions and 2-person presentations include Deli Gallery (New York, NY), East Hampton Shed (Brooklyn, NY), Mejia Gallery (Melbourne, AUS), and Mole End (Queens, NY). Upcoming group exhibitions include T293 Gallery (Rome, IT), and Envy6011 (Wellington, NZ).