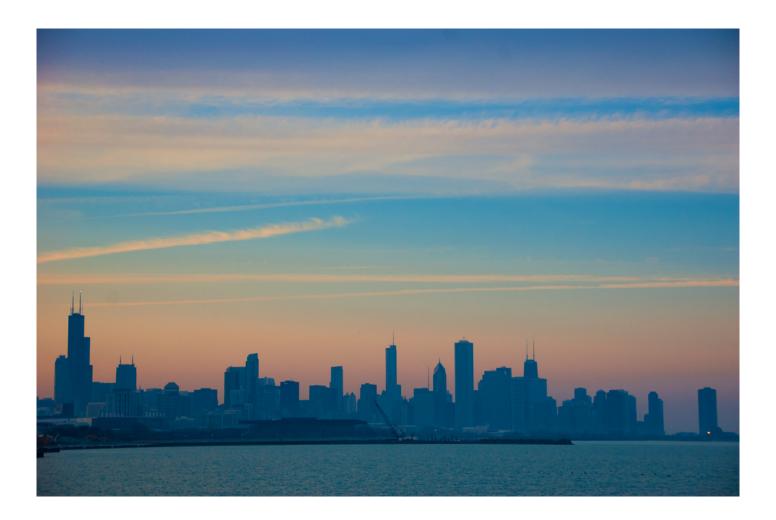
Water in Chicago [1]

October 1, 2018 <u>Featured Poetry</u> [2] <u>Politics of Place</u> [3]

Poem by Ayla Goktan



Water in Chicago

I chose this city because of what the lake taught me the first time I saw it: happiness is saturation

Part of me believes this, but part of me condemns: I am too beholden to aesthetics; I upset myself

Every "I," every eye, is political— Mine as I stand on the edge of the sand

 $(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m)\{i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;[r]=i[r]||function()\{\ (i[r],q=i[r],q||[]).push(arguments)\},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o),\\ m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) \})(window,document,'script','https://www.googlege 1 of 3 analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');$

Water in Chicago

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The eye of the lake, regarding sky

The eye of the camera that captured the earliest surviving photograph

(For though I thought it would choose a person, it, too, found worth in a view)

And the eye of the temple in Wilmette, reminding me that even beautiful things we think are free go unseen by the poorest among us

(Matthew Desmond writes of a woman native to Milwaukee who's never seen the lake)

So how can I enjoy what lies before me? And yet, I do—Dusk comes; it changes things, rippling pinks across the powder blue of lake and sky Variation gives meaning to distance, and I imagine I can almost glimpse all the evenings I'm meant to spend here spread before me; pocket evenings I could hold in my palm, somehow extending to the rim of the world

The lake strikes up my hunger, then tames it; limits the city's searching lights
Years from here, I will know what I don't know now:
Every time until the last time I flew out of Chicago at night, I looked beyond the airplane's thumbprint window, and onto every darkness,
I projected water

Publishing Information

- "The First Photograph" [4] (circa 1826), Henry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.
- Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City by Matthew Desmond (Crown, 2016).

Art Information

• "Pastel City [5]" © Eric Allix Rogers; Creative Commons license.

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Ayla Goktan graduated from Northwestern University in 2017 with bachelor's degrees in psychology and flute performance. She currently lives in Cork City, Ireland. Her poetry has been published in *The Best Emerging Poets of Illinois*, *Driftwood Press*, and *New Plains Review*. She was also long-listed for the 2017 Nâzim Hikmet Poetry Award.

Follow her on Twitter @ayla goktan [6].

Source URL: https://www.talkingwriting.com/water-chicago

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