

## EXTRACT: LUKE McCREADIE

She continued reading:

*Later that night, on the cycle home, she had pictured in her mind a series of objects. It was as though she was passing over them slowly, very low to the ground and the angle had given the objects an epic quality, as though they were part of some convulsing, spastic landscape. They were mundane, redundant, insistent, banal: a large, stale poppadum, long thin rollings of clay formed into imaginary spectacles, the image of an apostrophe cut from metal, a lumpen hand, a square of amber coloured resin. A certain dumbness in the face of neglect, rejection, abandonment was enervating. It had bothered her. Arguing against ornament in objects of daily use is one thing but she was quite convinced –as she stole silently into the architect’s beautiful garden –that the daily evolution of objects was synonymous with the absolute removal of language. Language could not be, for her at least, should never be a precondition for the simple existence of objects in space. The architect had strongly argued for the opposite. Without language as a tool to navigate, or negotiate, the architect had argued, the only way we would function would be as eternal spectators, permitted only to stand around and stare in mute and permanent awe at the apparent randomness of objects. This was why she had decided to break in to the garden this way, to do what she had to do; this was what she wanted to decisively prove to her (the architect) after their argument. For anyone else, the architect included, it was a fairly boring and redundant argument. For her it meant everything, risking, as she was now, almost certain arrest and ignominy as she struggled over the wall, watched discreetly by a neighbour’s dog. Halfway up she had begun to worry about the inevitability of snagging her handbag on the top of the architect’s wall: a momentary fear of being caught there, stuck up there forever. She became suddenly heated. If it did become snagged, she fantasised as she climbed, she was almost certain to lose control, to struggle wildly to free herself. In that imagined struggle she would be bound to fall, to fall down there, down into the perfectly ordered garden. The frustrating line of objects popped again into her head at just the wrong moment. She began to think about Dürer’s Rhinoceros because of the architect, she wishes she had brought it to mind at the time but as so often happens, she only*

thought of it at this useless moment, long after the event. Essentially it is a two-dimensional rendering of a three-dimensional reality (potential sculpture, a ready made). But in this case the whole process operates somewhat in reverse, in that objects are usually conceived of as inert until they are fully ratified, vivified by the endorsement of language. The drawing of the rhinoceros comes from a written description and in this case, the object vivifies language, rendering it inert. In the face of the endlessly imaginable beast, language is merely the descriptor of an unwelcome, inadequate reality. She dropped from the ivy and landed lightly. The grass was well manicured, the earth soft from the earlier rain. Looming up over her, the apple tree was silhouetted against the glow of the city, the ladder leaning against the trunk as always. She reached into her bag for the gluepot and by the light of her phone began to pick out each of the tiny apples. She coated the first one in the glue solution and moved onto the next, giving each enough time for the glue to soften and become tacky. After she had applied the solution to five of the apples, she reached for the paper sheets and her softest brush and, again by phone-light, began to apply the first pieces of the leaf. She continued on for the next few hours. She worked slowly and, of course, as she got more engaged in the process, she began to worry less and less about the fact she was trespassing in the architect's garden, that the police could turn up at any time, that a light might suddenly turn on to expose her, that an alarm would be tripped or, worst of all: that she would be have to leave the garden with the job half finished. She worked on until the first bird began its song. Her phone warned her she only had 5% power remaining. She checked and rechecked her work for the final time. She stood back to admire it and could not see a single apple that wasn't fully gilded. The light began to change. Turning back from the wall she saw the sun was picking out the first glints of gold amongst the foliage.