Archival Post Poster

Original poem by Sylee Gore, cento elements collaged from texts by Jacques Derrida, Hal Foster, Saidiya Hartman, Thomas Osborne, and others.

1.1 I plan to leave early, though I know I have all day. 2.1 Nothing is less reliable, nothing is less clear today than the word “archive” *uncat.* *‘Proof’ is a word like ballast and like wet sand – how I want to be weighted down.* 2.2 The concept of the archive shelters in itself, of course, this memory of the name 1.2 My hair is neat and I rinse the mug before I wipe the hotplate.

1.3 This bed was here when I came. I found the lamp on the street. 2.3 The meaning of “archive,” its only meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile *uncat.* *The stroke of the page versus the stroke of the screen* 2.4 It is at their home, in that *place* which is their house, that official documents are filed 1.4 Only the books are mine.

1.5 My walls are thin and traffic rattles the cutlery. 2.5 They do not only ensure the physical security – they have the power to interpret the archives. *uncat. We dreamt of homes to house the homes we lost* 3.1 Perhaps any archive is founded on disaster, pledged against a ruin that it cannot forestall 1.6 But from noon to night, this high room is a single box of light. 3.2 These conflicting signs erupt together in this archival space, yet they also appear entropic there,

1.5 I slip a banana into my bag, then remove it and pack some crackers instead. 3.3 There is nothing passive about the word “archival”. *uncat. A place where everything belongs.* 4.1 Archives are not only for fusty antiquarians. 1.6 I doubt I’ll live here long.

1.7 The lift stinks of piss. 4.2 Obviously there are real places called archives, and obviously there might be real and effective histories of such places *uncat. Spare dun walls; stone. Marble!* 4.3 As a principle of credibility the archive does need to exist as a real place 1.8 I thought I’d go by foot, but I dallied too long.

1.9 Gold-edged clouds cover the sky. 4.4 These, then, are the spirits of the archive. *uncat. And to archive the heavens?* 4.5 If the existence of an archive always presumes the existence of a public, this is not necessarily the same thing as the *general* public. 1.10 A sky-blue sky like the blue on ads for dating apps and discount package tours.

1.11 The subway is crowded when I enter. 4.6 These, then, are the spirits of the archive. *uncat. An underground space, a space of burial* 4.7 The person who speaks from the archive is the person who mediates between secrets and the public. 1.12 When I emerge above ground, I don’t know where to go.

1.13 The amber glass doors exude cool air as I approach. 4.8 But if many archives are kept deliberately secret, they are there only to be *used*. *uncat. I have always dreamt of a place to put everything: shelves not stacks, and a presiding spirit ordering it all* 4.9 One aspect of the modernity of the archive is that it should ultimately relate to some kind of *public memory*. 1.14 ‘Can I help?’ she asks, and sounds amused.

1.15 Sunshine filters through the glass. 4.10 Kings constitute memory-institutions. *uncat. To come to the field of battle, sword held high, without a foe* 5.1 The archive is, in this case, a death sentence, a tomb, a display of the violated body, an inventory of property, a medical treatise on gonorrhea, a few lines about a whore’s life, an asterisk in the grand narrative of history. 1.16 ‘Fill out a slip for what you need.’

1.17 I steal a glance at the desk beside me. 5.2 And how does one tell impossible stories that failed to be recorded in the archive? *uncat. No king to declare a victor, no jeering crowd primed to fling a peach* 5.3 Unfortunately I have not discovered a way of deranging the archive. 1.18 I seize a slip and fill it out at random.

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