



**GUEST POET**

*Aimee A. Norton*



## *My Work Brinks Me*

**B**UILDING a telescope involves  
twenty-three power struggles  
per funding period per bathroom  
on the second floor.

While concrete is poured  
atop a dormant volcano,  
machines in DC laser-print  
contracts for the Coudé-haunch.

My eye-twitch worsens.  
Who approves the grinding  
of mirrors and the making  
of motors to turn tricks?

This one is designed,  
line by photon-fine line,  
for ground-breaking science  
from the ground.

Another's in orbit,  
tossed to space by an Atlas-V,  
blinking its bits to me by antenna,  
all high-gained and slow-slewed.

The cords under my desk come to life,  
hissing little electrical breaths ...  
alter- (inhale) nating (exhale) current.  
I must feed them formula from my fingertips.

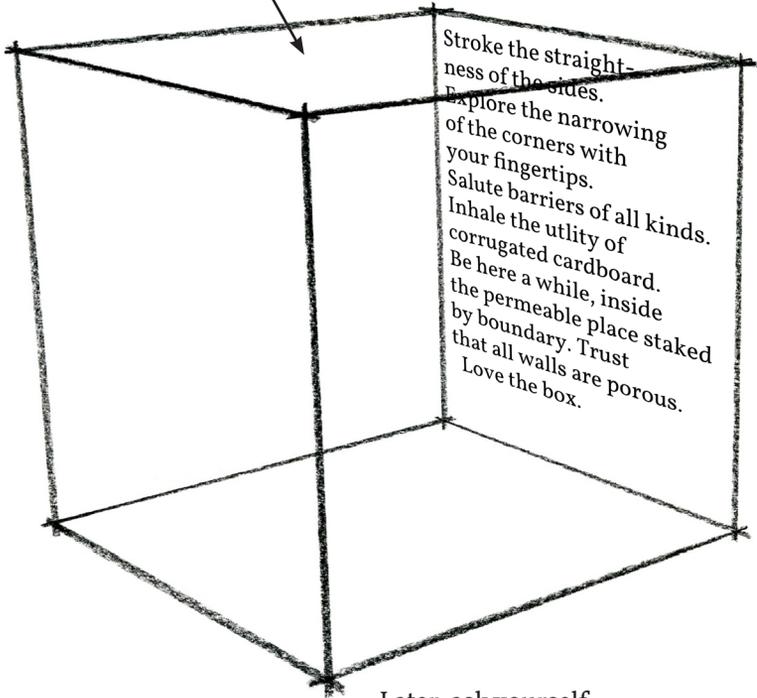
The data dare me, pixel by pixel,  
to face them. Optical eye to optical eye,  
my mind to their mind, two parts  
exploring their piecewise ways.

A knowing scurries  
from a corner of the sky  
to the light fixture in the other room  
then grows sickly once captured

in the glass.  
I do the only thing I can –  
truncate the wings and  
normalize to unity.

*Step by Step Instructions for How to Think Outside the Box*

**G**<sub>ET</sub> IN the box.



Later, ask yourself  
if you or your thoughts ever  
left the box.

## *A Predator of Light*

**H**ERE, THE mountaintop edges into mortality  
and telescopes perch white as snow leopards  
eager to leap skyward, eager to capture  
the math of the heavens in their animal pupils.

I am a predator of light, stalking photons  
in a drought of sound. The stars mute their ticktick-  
tocking,  
not oscillating for ears  
desperate to hear beginnings and ends.

I point mirrors and farm coordinates.  
A slave to the sky, I am satisfied  
only when meaty sequences in a star's life  
are pared into bite-sized equations.

In the hush of the hunt, reason grinds  
itself into a knuckle-biting mortar and pestle,  
a suspense equal to the pause  
of the predator before its pounce,

or the comma of the mind before  
comprehension comes like rain.  
Then my research drags its hind legs  
a few squares ahead on the graph paper.

*Sputnik, listen up*



O man-made moonlet with a made-in Moscow beep, you are more politics at  
40 megaHertz,  
You are a trilling ovum, streaking the first human glow  
across a new,  
Dream von Braun sends you a playmate, quick, before  
now-moaning sky  
Your batteries die  
and you drop  
of starlight.  
like a silver canary, mute, no longer in a constant bath