

Now: Navigate!

Kevin Devine

There are tiers, as in levels, to reality
On the industrial corner of North 17th Street & Wythe
Two black public high school kids watch a Nordic model get photographed
To them, she is lunar, impossible, alien life
So, as a comet might relate to a traffic-stopped taxicab
Or a Bahamas vacation to a stint in Guantanamo Bay
So, as access & privilege relate to their absolute opposites
That's the way that these kids & this woman will always relate

And it's nobody's fault
Yeah, no one's to blame
We all work through the dark
We all carry the weight
Slender shoulders & blindfolds
Spinning in cycles
Now, now, now: navigate!

There are tiers, as in layers, to an experience
Through each lens & metric, the image warps every day
I'm either successful, independent, & largely uncompromised
Or a non-starter, never-was, has-been since 2008

And it's nobody's fault
Yeah, no one's to blame
We all work through the dark
We all carry the weight
Slender shoulders & blindfolds
Spinning in cycles
Now, now, now: navigate!

There are tears, as in waterworks, and they're threatening
To spoil the negotiated sweetness of my afternoon
I can't answer anything honestly without an asterisk
Airquotes and doublespeak litter the fountain of youth

And if it's nobody's fault
Then I'm not to blame
I just work in the dark
I just carry the weight
Slender shoulders & blindfolds
Stranded in cycles
Now, now, now: navigate!