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Little Intangible Wrongdoings

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

LITTLE INTANGIBLE WRONGDOINGS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

CREATIVE WRITING

by

Jaden Gongaware

2022

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This thesis, written by Jaden Gongaware, and entitled Little Intangible Wrongdoings, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Martha Schoolman

Campbell McGrath

Denise Duhamel, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 10, 2022

The thesis of Jaden Gongaware is approved.

Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2022

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

LITTLE INTANGIBLE WRONGDOINGS

by

Jaden Gongaware

Florida International University, 2022

Miami, Florida

Professor Denise Duhamel, Major Professor

LITTLE INTANGIBLE WRONGDOINGS is a collection of poems that explores the urgency of climate change and pervasiveness of gender bias. The collection's themes interact with the natural, supernatural, and fictional worlds of television and movies. The speaker explores zeitgeist moments while leaning into the occult, asking the reader to consider topics like memory, time, and spirits. The collection is divided into three sections, with poems being ordered thematically and by form. The first section asserts the feminist speaker and ushers forward contemporary issues of the 21st century. The second section plays with form, situating the speaker in place at her childhood home. The final section plays with dichotomy, utilizing forms like stereoscopes as mirrors to popular cultural. Toggling between free-verse and form, the voice in the collection balances dreaminess, humor, and assertiveness, reminiscent of its influences in contemporary poetry like Stacey Waite, Ariel Francisco, and Li-Young Lee.

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Spare

I can't spare a square / is the first thing I think when I hear spare / I have everything to spare
down to my bones / I gave blood every blood drive / fainted 8 times in a row / I'm always
teetering on anemia / I get migraines / when I faint especially / I wake up / & can't speak /
aphasic / the 'a' prefix meaning without / I'm always finding myself without / I almost never
pick up a spare / I never hurdle the bowling ball hard enough / on the first try / to pick up the
strike / 3 strikes is a turkey / 3 goals is a hattrick / 3 wishes is landslide of luck & trick / I like to
believe in street magicians / even though it makes me a fool / I'd rather lean into the
unexplainable with all my weight / I have so many memories that feel unexplainable / the spare
bedroom of my house is haunted / the nightmares take everyone / off guard / the spare bedroom
stays sealed / shut / off water in my dad's house / was the last pull of the trigger / before
foreclosure / I lost all my stuff to a bank or the state / including a VHS tape I thought was lost
forever / I googled & googled & googled / to find it again / meanwhile / the house was gone / I'd
spare centuries worth of moments / if it meant the people I love would be happy / or at least rich
/ the idea behind capitalism is to never spare a penny / I spent my whole my childhood sparing
pennies to railroad tracks / & in table presses / to make them flat / we'd collect railroad spikes
that teetered out of place / it never felt like stealing / because of how their bodies were discarded
/ I wonder if its atypical for tracks to split apart / I keep pennies on my windowsill / because a
witch told me to / bring wealth through the windows / don't you dare leave it tails up / the word
spare always looks like spade at first glance / if I can guess your card / without seeing it / am I
better than a street magician / I always know a trick deck when I see one / the trick is to hide the
whole back of the card with your palm / I shouldn't tell their secrets / I like to keep secrets / little

intangible wrongdoings / I'll spare the space in my brain for words that will never come out / like
a book only I know / like a VHS tape no one else has ever seen

Euphemisms & Marsh Roots Have the Same Depth

Double Golden Shovel: The Vagina Monologues “The Flood” & Cardi B’s “WAP”

Wet lips in winter, you shouldn’t lick them, you’ll dry up like a plum, & I love you—
ass, thigh, sweat, thigh, flesh in soft secret heat. Some parts of me I know, some I just don’t.
Pussy willow cattails gush today on the marsh bank & we tell the sun exactly what we want,
bring a rulebook everywhere we go—don’t get [lips, wood tables, Gremlins] wet. To
bucket flood water is to kiss futility & we’ve been breathing through the reeds. Go
& dive down there sounds like a dare. [Don’t even name it, forget lick & pleasure]. Go down,
a mop of algae blooming on the surface, swim in the wet sweet of what’s down there.

Stereoscope: Inherited Wealth is Not an Adaption

so the rich ecosystems flourish
stay rich & evolve, they inherit only the good
and the poor defense mechanisms fail
stay poor or adapt over centuries
or die and go extinct.
when they asked what you inherited—
count your fortune in seasons survived
life in pennies always comes up short,
guess how many species worship greed—
generations of billionaires,
of mistrust in government,
will be bought out until overrun
by Amazon- dense, sturdy root
& inherited wealth trickles deep into the soil.

Seinfeld is on Netflix Now

& that's my little miracle of the day after losing out on the box set after a breakup nothing is better news. So I'm binging. Elaine: that wall of hair full body dry heave set to music dance. Elaine telling me to stand up for myself like my character depends on it to run with men. I see her stuck underground on the subway standing 5' 2'' in a huddle of strangers screaming about how different her life would have been if she shelled out six bucks for a cab and I'm thinking about how different my life would have been if I broke up with people on a whim. Elaine would have told me to run. Would have given me the classic full body shove saying *get out!* She breaks up with Keith Hernandez for smoking cigarettes. One for failure to use exclamation points in a note about the birth of a baby. Puddy for being a face-painter at a hockey game. Puddy for being dumb. Puddy for wearing fur but only because she didn't want to hold the arm of an idiot. Because one guy shared the name of a serial killer, one for going bald, the close-talker's sickening kindness to Jerry's parents. Because she had to fake fake fake fake the breathing the panting the moaning the screaming. For no reason at all she just hates his guts. He's pro-life. Refers to himself in the third person. Not sponge-worthy. He's a bad breaker-upper, he's poor (and married), Crazy Joe Davolla's stalking her with a camera. Because he took *it* out in the driver seat at the end of the night, because yada yada yada because she's queen of the castle master of her domain until John F Kennedy Jr gets her with his good looks.