

Teinoscope

(Physics) An instrument formed by combining prisms so as to correct the chromatic aberration of the light while linear dimensions of objects seen through the prisms are increased or diminished; called also prism telescope.

I have seen you standing still beneath
rapid clouds at dusk, collecting the light,
drawing the gathered radiance in like breath.

You store it everywhere—as lines, faces,
in crowded notebooks—till it spills out, bright,
new-made. Is this creation, these mixed pieces,

When patched-together, conglomerate, they
emerge like sparks from your hands, lightened
and whole?

Some men stockpile days

Like weapons, against the cataclysm.
From you, the stored scraps of collected light
leak like constant suns. And what wrought prisms

allow these sudden visions: myself, made
larger and more beautiful, all the bright
fragments ripened and mingled, naked, laid

like webs of stars together? Those saved skies
reflected back to me, mirrors on mirrors,
A tiny universe within your eyes?

—Marilyn Nielson

This poem received honorable mention in the BYU Studies
2012 poetry contest.