



Public Figures (Wesleyan Poetry Series)

Jena Osman

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Public Figures is an essay-poem with photographs and text that begins with a playful thought experiment: statues of people in public spaces have eyes, but what are they looking at? To answer that question, Jena Osman sets up a camera to track the gaze of a number of statues in Philadelphia—mostly 19th century military figures carrying weapons. How does their point of view differ from our own? And how does it compare, say, to the point of view of other watchful military figures, such as drone pilots? In this book, Osman combines the histories behind these statues with poetic narratives that ask us to think about our own relational positions, and how our own everyday gaze may be complicit with the gun-sights of war. Public Figures illustrates how history is transformed, and even erased, by monuments and other public records of events. Through poetry, those histories can be made visible again. Check for the online reader's companion at http://publicfigures.site.wesleyan.edu.



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