

***SURVEILLANCE***

**By Louis Kasatkin**

The lives of others  
through the end of  
a telephoto lens ;  
A suburban cul-de-sac  
with an unmarked delivery van  
parked in the driveway  
of the house opposite;  
Ephemera of the lives of others  
recorded in neat handwriting ,  
daily routines timetabled in  
line-ruled pocket notebooks ;  
In the lives of others  
a telephone rings ,  
its receiver is lifted ,  
there is a rush of silence ,  
a menacing voicelessness ;  
Their spools of tape engage  
click , click ,  
a haunting absence of noise ,  
the receiver is replaced ,  
click ;  
In the soundproofed cellar  
voices on playback  
mimic the lives of others ,  
they hear you listening to them  
listening to you listening ;

observed , recorded ,  
collated , analysed ,  
click .

***ALIENATION / ALIEN NATION***

We went into the Valley of Elah  
looking for victory and reasons to carry on ,  
when we got there those reasons had gone ;  
they'd quietly slipped away  
leaving us with nothing more to say ;  
when we got back  
we didn't recognise ourselves ,  
we looked at our faces in the mirror  
that only showed someone else ;  
all our words too had their meaning changed  
for something that we couldn't understand ,  
and we who were born here  
became strangers in our own land .

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Louis is editorial administrator at [www.DestinyPoets.co.uk](http://www.DestinyPoets.co.uk) and is very proud to be a Senior Editor with Episteme.

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