

## Beaufort Scale of Wind Force

Force	Knots	Km/h	Description	Specifications for Use at Land
0	<1	<1	CALM	Calm; smoke rises vertically
1	1-3	1-6	LIGHT AIR	Direction of wind shown by smoke drift; but not by wind vanes
2	4-6	7-12	LIGHT BREEZE	Wind felt on face; leaves rustle; ordinary vane moved by wind
3	7-10	13-19	GENTLE BREEZE	Leaves and small twigs in constant motion; wind extends light flag
4	11-16	20-30	MODERATE BREEZE	Raises dust and loose paper; small branches moved
5	17-21	31-39	FRESH BREEZE	Small trees in leaf begin to sway; crested wavelets form on inland waters
6	22-27	40-50	STRONG BREEZE	Large branches in motion; whistling heard in telegraph wires; umbrellas used with difficulty
7	28-33	51-62	NEAR GALE	Whole trees in motion; inconvenience felt when walking against wind
8	34-40	63-74	GALE	Breaks twigs off trees; generally impedes progress
9	41-47	75-87	STRONG GALE	Slight structural damage occurs (chimney pots and slates removed)
10	48-55	75-87	STORM	Seldom experienced inland; trees uprooted; considerable structural damage occurs
11	56-63	103-117	VIOLENT STORM	Very rarely experienced; accompanied by widespread damage
12	>64	>118	HURRICANE	—

# THE WORK OF WIND: AIR, LAND, SEA

Volume 1

## The Work of Wind: Land

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This book is published as part of *The Work of Wind: Air, Land, Sea*, a variegated set of curatorial and editorial instantiations of the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force, developed by Christine Shaw from June 2018 to September 2019. It is the first volume in a three-part publication series, with two additional volumes forthcoming in 2019.

workofwind.ca

the work  
of WIND  
AIR  
LAND  
SEA

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New  
Chapter  
2017 and Beyond



**THE WORK OF WIND  
AIR, LAND, SEA**

Volume 1

**The Work of Wind  
Land**

co-edited by Christine Shaw  
& Etienne Turpin

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2018

## THE WORK OF WIND: AIR, LAND, SEA

In 1806, the British sea admiral Sir Francis Beaufort invented the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force as an index of thirteen levels measuring the effects of wind force. It was first used for the practical navigation of nineteenth-century ocean space; through a system of observation, wind speed was measured by observing how it composes at sea (for example, waves are formed) and decomposes on land (for example, leaves are blown from trees, chimney pots lifted, houses are destroyed).

Across a variegated set of curatorial and editorial instantiations developed by Christine Shaw in 2018/19, the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force becomes a diagram of prediction and premonition in the context of accelerating planetary extinction. *The Work of Wind: Air, Land, Sea* appropriates the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force as a readymade index for curating a site-specific exhibition in the Southdown industrial area of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, and a publication divided into three conjoining volumes. The project is extended by the *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, a public program and broadsheet series.

While the title might suggest a weather project, it is not about wind but of wind, of the forces of composition and decomposition predicated on the complex entanglements of ecologies of excess, environmental legacies of colonialism, the financialization of nature, contemporary catastrophism, politics of sustainability, climate justice, and resilience.

## 12 HURRICANE

### The Theory of the Fire Ants

Juliana Spahr

— for Cheena Marie Lo

Everything starts with rains, with wind,  
with the disappearance of lizards and mosquitos,  
with the appearance of land crabs,  
and the nervous activity of red ants and cockroaches.  
A muted sky too.  
A bleak wasteland.  
An empty shore.

With rains, with wind.  
With an oak swaying vehemently.  
With swallows flying low,  
and bridled terns and brown noddies flying high,  
with thousands of alligators traveling inwards,  
as the blacktip sharks all together move out of the bay  
so as to sink below  
into the blue black depths  
as the currents strengthen  
and the sea pulls back from one shore  
just so as to surge on another.

All our thoughts start with rains, with wind.  
A long unending rain and  
a wind from the mountains that darkens,  
a wind that carries or causes to be carried,  
a most tremendous wind,  
a most tremendous wind to ever be remembered by  
the oldest person.

While one intrepid whimbrel flies through,  
we hold tight, hunkered down,  
sharing with the wind  
the theory of the place we know,  
the spirals of the rivers and brooks,  
the forests and the woods,  
the coppices and the pastures,  
the towns and the boroughs,  
the theory of the fire ants that latch onto each other  
and form a living mound that floats on the  
water's surface,  
and the theory of the birds that get into the end of the  
hurricane's spiral and then move inward toward  
the calm until they are moving with the eye,  
which is the theory of the Earth,  
which is also the theory of the sea,  
and the theory of the city and of the large politics of  
the States,  
as well as the theory of the rights,  
and the theory of flight.

Some of these things resemble us,  
provide a model for us.  
Some do not.  
We will never be blacktip shark  
nor intrepid whimbrel.  
That much is obvious.  
There is no going under in this moment,  
no flying through.  
We have to wait it out.  
Some of us fleeing and watching from afar.  
Others of us hunkering down in a dark room,  
windows covered.  
Some of us with a roof  
and some of us without.  
Still others of us out in the wind,  
some by choice,  
some by circumstance.  
When it is over,  
we will grab onto each other  
use our claws, our jaws,  
even the adhesive pads on our legs.  
and secreting an oily fluid,  
we will trap the air against our body  
and then suddenly float, all linked together  
on a raft made out of ourselves  
so as to hold each other up together.  
We will be floating for about a week with each other.  
But then the clean-up not really done,  
the roofs not yet fully repaired,

the electrical system not really working  
and even though there is no reason every moment  
should not be like this  
for whatever reason we will decide no more  
and our claws, our jaws, the pads on our legs,  
our oily fluid  
will give way  
and we will shelter down in the current form of  
capitalism  
that we so often mistake for autonomy.

JULIANA SPAHR edits the book series *Chain Links* with Jena Osman, the collectively funded Subpress with nineteen other people, and *Commune Editions* with Joshua Clover and Jasper Bernes. With David Buuck she wrote *Army of Lovers*. She has edited, with Stephanie Young, *A Megaphone: Some Enactments, Some Numbers, and Some Essays about the Continued Usefulness of Crotchless-Pants-and-a-Machine-Gun Feminism* (Chain Links, 2011); with Joan Retallack *Poetry & Pedagogy: The Challenge of the Contemporary* (Palgrave, 2006); and, with Claudia Rankine, *American Women Poets in the 21st Century* (Wesleyan University Press, 2002). With Joshua Clover, she has twice organized somewhat free schools, the 95 cent Skool (summer of 2010) and the Durruti Free Skool (summer of 2011), written on politics, on manifestos, applied for a job at the Poetry Foundation, and organized, with Chris Chen, too, the conference Poetry and/or Revolution. Her most recent book is *That Winter the Wolf Came*, from Commune Editions. *DuBois's Telegram: Literary Resistance and State Containment* is forthcoming from Harvard University Press. She lives in California.