

HEATHER TAYLOR JOHNSON

COLLECTIVE

We've formed this circle that morphs with each breath
with our weight shifting from one leg to the other
with the rocking of the sarong-draped pram.
I have somewhere to be but cannot leave the man in the middle

who holds a wooden chair in one hand and a unicycle in the other.
His parents must have encouraged greatness
and let him run Everywhere,
must have said it's okay to talk to strangers.
Five minutes pass and he's still talking to us.

We morph to smiles
to glances at one another
glances at the clock in the centre of the mall.

On his unicycle he draws us in
so now we're touching shoulders,
his zigzag like a child's mad scribble
on the city's pavement paper.
We're no longer strangers.

We answer questions about ourselves
lay bare our imagination as we shout out scenarios
and this, a further five minutes.

Friends and lovers wait at cafes
and check their mobiles for
messages.
We morph to applause and
exclamations
as he balances a chair in the palm
of his hand
balancing himself on a single tyre
and I think briefly that I balance daily
but never a crowd circles to watch

and when it's over, it's over—
we dissolve into the anonymity of the walking crowd
our circle now a series of impossible dots.

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