

Geraldine Pilgrim

12 white plastic bags are suspended between us by the air from 12 floor fans. Blow and rustle, the incessant call of the phone alarming us to the presence of a woman beyond the grey gauze frames. The woman on the other side. Here, and there, and the air between us. 12 bags, 12 months, a unit of time, a reflection, a pause.

The room here reflects the room there. At one point, I wonder if she is really... is she there? She is. Foot moves. She is wearing her glasses, so she wants to see this. She wants to witness. This discomfort. She remains still, impassive, unreachable. We don't connect. The phone rings.

'Hello?'

She doesn't breathe. I push the phone to my ear hard, but no breath. *"Hello, hello?"* Nothing. She watches. The five of us. watched.

Bags suspended

Fans turning

Time passing

We each take a turn in the chair, comfortable, white. White phone on table. White chair. White standard lamp – don't touch. We don't take any chances. *"Hello?"* We sit. We stare. Her disconnection - deliberate and controlling. We leave the phone off the hook.

In minutes, she has reduced some of us to sitting on the floor, back to the wall, disconnected.

"Put it back on the cradle"

"No"

Back on the cradle, the phone rings immediately. Nobody answers.

She mirrors us, watching, waiting.

She won't talk to us... so we talk to one another. We connect.

Then we decide to leave.