

CLAUDIA RANKINE

## *Public Trust: Script for Situation Video*

Daily we share the same elevators, streets, corridors,  
stairways, sidewalks, highways, arenas, restrooms,  
lobbies, subways, in short, all public spaces.

Even when access is gained by a ticket,  
the true price of the ticket is dependent on an implicit trust.

The understood question is always, can I trust you?

We signal indicating our desire to change lanes on the freeway,  
we cross streets without stop signs  
by catching the eye of the driver in the moving car.

We drift off in waiting areas. We are dreaming on planes.

We depend on those around us to keep us safe.

This is our unspoken agreement—

between us, between strangers.

Our civic contract states we will act in each other's best interest  
for no other reason than we are here together.

The allegiance we pledged is to one another.

Assurance is taken.

Can I trust you?

Assurance is taken.

Different from and similar to each other,

whatever our precise thinking  
behind the question,

the question is asked deep within us.

We recognize that inevitably I am  
going to have to put my trust in you.

We are circling an understanding that daily  
we are going to have to take a leap of faith  
regarding you.

In order that we can go on believing in our mobility,  
trust is what pledging an allegiance secures.

Public trust relies on both an implicit understanding  
and a mode of seeing.

Someone is paying attention.  
Someone is watching.

See?

If you see something say something  
because we will trust you.

Peace of mind gives us the ability to move through our day  
without fear. It keeps us in our rhythms.

It gives us an air of confidence regarding an illusory control of the world around us.

We drift off in waiting areas. We are dreaming on planes.

We understand what will happen next and this is crucial to a sense of well-being, even if this control is no control at all.

When something occurs that disallows the taking for granted of one's own safety, when something happens, when that thing happens,

we might find discomfort in a loss of comfort, we might lose an ease of movement around another, the perceived inability to trust another.

No one wishes his or her sense of trust violated.

Each time we pass through our public spaces, the question presents as a gentle nudge against an unconscious reliance on public trust.

Would you, could you, should you trust?

We are dozing in airports. We are dreaming on planes.

As we daily move through our streets, in our parks, across bridges, in the aisles of stores, anywhere and everywhere we live a simple truth and a basic understanding exists.

When I walk toward you

It's one of the reasons I am interested in

As we turn to each other

It's one of the reasons I am interested in

Each second inside our unspoken question

Is one of the reasons I am interested in

Can I trust you?

*(June 1, 2015)*