

Marc Paltrineri

A NEW WAY OF SAYING THINGS

*"It's always one world
if you can get there."*

—Robert Creeley

Eclipse means everything, so goodbye.
I'm disappearing now
into the newborn palm of the street.

The world is full of jack-o-lantern hearts.
The twilight says so
with its leafy breath,

that we'll be dead before
the sun is, waiting anonymously still.
It's like a hole, you can't fill it

without pouring some story into a stranger's glass.
And is it boring? To say too much
is to wander a road,

lost in the pupil of conceit.
Orange rain falling
through a pewter night's blue,

I wait on this side of a midnight departure.
The city closes its fist,
keeps me warm,

briefly, as the figure in the window drifts
from one lit room to
the darkened next.

SECOND WIND

for Jan Hammerquist

Four is a good number, unfruitful.
Falling down moves my molecules,
now bring the body forward.
This meditation requires a group
forgetting the sun to wash water.
Seeds of the futurepast are not outraged.
All is silent, closing like a flower, your second wind.
Everyone must feel free to mistake this,
epithet or epitaph or
there would be no death to return to,
(I winter, shiver blank
in the movement) from out
these trials of seas, chants of flowers.
Yesterday I counted
up to 947. Today will I go higher,
burn through dark amnesia?
The trumpets of summer
are turning away, towards a wilt
in the impossible mind, blasts
a destructive flourish, that verb-noun.
When this state is reached, the full focus is sleep,
and yet, fall falls to spring and both are none,
cooling off in the swim, losing feeling.
It is hard, you take an object
and crystallize its fire, just look at it
like a nothingness. Okay,
honey, back to the sidewalk,
entropy fills the sky. I spring up—lilt,
tilt, count the waves.
Forgetting it all, the man said,
and asked for something more.

SESTINA

Open your umbrella, this is yesterday's rain. It was the mold that made us long and wander, blacking like sleep on a crumb-creviced moon. Wind crafted wind then made glass out of boredom, boxing what we couldn't feel: the touch of a window, brush of bare arm. The forest creaks at its hinges, arm against arm, while the rain falls like someone else's, a piece of furniture, draped in blue, so as not to feel the worn meadows of age. How long, how far will she wander the ghost who corks my distance in glass, cures it and distills it. I think I'm turning part moon, waxing linoleum, bland as any other moon. There is a sound the flesh on flesh makes when I touched you, your arm, or the jungle of our heads, that still makes glass drip like glass, and windows open to windows in a cellophane rain. Home is where the heart grows yonder, even if to wander is to smudge out your name and feel the erasure of driving through deserts, to feel the blank blueness of windshields seeping in. And yet another moon swallows the map so I wander out into the tattooed personae of my arm. Somewhere, there's a horizon curtained by a silent film of rain and behind that shower curtain grows a city of glass; and if that's true, then what else is glass but the opiate of distance, because how could I feel the rain when there is no rain, the moon coined-over with some counterfeit moon? I pinch the skin, but of course, it's only my arm that wanders the leash-length of hope that someone else out there wanders and, in turn, shatters and fits into this panel of glass. From this spot, the world is naked past the arms, shivers slightly, and this time I finally feel like falling in the mood of a present day rain, to pool in the craters of a cloud-nothinged moon. Shuttering the umbrellas, let your bare arms feel. The wandering marrow, the indoors of rain is now open. Just please watch the glass. We broke trying to find life on the moon.

IN A PLACE OF FULLNESS

for Calista Tarnauskas

All day I have contemplated babies,
how to live where the water tastes like blood.
Singing requiems to a landscape's fetish,
the buckets are full of mostly dead things,
a corrugated voice.

Let's set the scene: in October,
1726, Mary Toft gave birth
to her first rabbit. Seeing beasts
in the garden (and to lie down thereto)
some of us become open doorways lighted
from within, a cascading hoax you can't
even imagine.

The smell of hair
has a knife in its maw, fallopian movements are caused
by tiny rabbits jumping. I am scarier
than the things—cardboard box, honey, shadows;
scarier than granite. I wonder what the babies
do when I'm not looking. There's always something
half-eaten.

In the first monster Mary
birthed, fragments of eel bone
he, she, resembling a cat.

Funny how it's food
reminds me your goneness; to bruised onions
hearts are comparatively bulky.
All day I have contemplated—these
remnants of a curtain, teeth not worn—
babies. I can hear you wondering out loud.
Behind your bucolic moon bottle,
why does it smell like home tonight,
moldy as oranges and never been
opened?

The authorities, confining Mary
to a public exhibition, made idealists
out of everyone. Heavy with milk, the moon escaped
to where Georgia O'Keefe sits in my doorway
a tall deaf child.

The things I'm scared of—I am scarier than
the lanolin of absence. All day
I contemplated babies, kept them around and together
we breathed for a time, considering water
but swallowed the salt instead.

SINCE THE SKULL IS ALWAYS SMILING

Holes or not we'll never know
The silver lining mends the inside coat
In the soda of starlight and good luck

Again time for our pennies to fizz
It's time for a change
Glow indefinitely the historical dark
All our trees fit noosed or christmas tasseled
In a storage unit somewhere
Or frost for that matter for spring

As we abandoned the lyre
We abandon these playthings
Left for their rubbernecking answers

On we go a correspondence of stars

Named these streets and will rename them
There's a river beneath this river
Out of view
In small letters
Then your cameo ascending
Of adults like dandruff

Is blood a poison? that century was full
Not real I tasted different metallic when you asked me
To whiten the teeth was
Who was I back then? The grape they used
A colorless sunset

I fade in my most worn-out places
A sparrow gets lost in the eaves of your nightgown

Since the skull is always smiling
Since thousands more are dead