

**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