

Alec Hershman

Wait, Miracle

Wait, I thought until it was remembering,
a long time along a road with no shoulder,
many cars, just to go to the choke-pond,
and see a duckling vanish in implacable water.
I was also steadfastly empurpled from years
of disbelieving and mental redness,
where my face met the warbled version
of its own, glum detective. A duckling was
a preposterous thing to lose, and ineluctable,
the sun's tongue found me crouched on the dock
for a varicose factor of blue to leave, and let me
reside awhile in the outskirts of the ember,
fled of the mouth I'm still not sorry for.

Awning

Haunted by Platonic homes, I rehearsed
for homelessness. But in fact, my bed
was a plush obscenity, my room, huge,
as were the meals I skipped to hear
the bad blood shift a little in my stomach.
How strange to get one's own legs back
in Michigan, and feel again the grip
of that estrangement. This morning,
Lady Straiten held out her purse
like someone who cared for me by rote,
then turning, perfected a smoke parachute,
an air-puddle, like the one the geese leave
after the loudest of them announces that
the rest is over, winter is a steady lion,
and neither shall they dawdle all November
only to get eaten by the king. I don't know
if I'm called to a place, or from it, but I spend
too much daylight thinking pillows
will let me down, and building psychic ladders
to the dishes, or slipping my mistaken head
into a pond. Too much time on this infernal dock,
guessing how all praise expires, and sketching
the queen, again and again, whose gown
spills terribly red, and terribly open—
These are the hard sounds of wings breaking
the surface. The water, line by line,
reaching after them—each time a little less.

Wind, Despite My Stillness

The tops of buildings hump my blood panel—
the sky, forever high, considers lowing. There's so
much left of impossible verandas, the ivory placards
of birdless, snowed-upon roofs. I hang an orange hood
over the parking meter. I have my white dishrag in hand
for news. The noose of thinking perfect thoughts
replaces me, and now—a hefty deck of years,
meant deeply, to pond-rot and to thaw, peters off.
Loves, you ember like scrota, but the frond
in my heart-valve flags, less combustible of late
than patient. What will shine itself and lift a leaf?
No jagged scrap of lightning, this sap in winter,
like a slow cat, reaches up for the handle of the door.

The Abduction of Mr. Clumsy Participant

Days followed out from the story
of to walk—to learn to—and to wake,
as though the hand outside the stanchion
of its sentence moved but hungrily. Vergessel-
schaftung—among many I'm compelled
to list from consequence, tintured with solitude,
gathered passably around an ore that's possibly inert,
but might noble to a larger order—uncooperative
to mortal gatherings of malice and prestige.
Something mantles can't handle undergirds
my noddy smile—the quake of a priggish avalanche—
little topographs of power authored by a sleepy denizen
who resembles me—terrains known somatically,
like an asshole's aster cinch, burnt into the field:
the whirl of a spacecraft's probing digit draws
a dawny shout in a bowl of hills.

Instead

I'm not convinced the truth
is small, but then,
I'm not a poet.

Buoyant, perhaps—I could see that—
bedsheeted for a fickle map,
or stormily belaked,

or maybe lakeless in the sunned-up
crush of full-blown locust—
humid, when I'm secretly large

upon previous, equivocal words.
I recall them getting girded
by rehearsal; so what

if I've recorded them here to hold
in a slow hope. Honestly,
the days go faster since

I've licked the vision
of a phoebic pact I felt I had
to make with a demanding man

in excellence, or else have made
with me. Now horses graze
hotly in adequate grass,

and the stately comforts of my lover's house
bear me like so much unremarkable
carbon, the first fossils growing

common beside a stalwart excavation. Earthed
by a hiding of blue, the moon must be
smug in its blown-out solitude,

while greenly in the gelding-glow,

with an all but absent 'O,' I wear
brief mittens. Unlike the desert life

of its guise, the lion, the coward
never sleeps, and so beset
by unfound freshness worries
when he does, he'll never wake.
Persistent as two lightning bugs,
on one another, he and I

pour the satisfactions of our lasers
in a wet cliché of eyes. O Lord,
don't let it be love; I have a bow

in my heated arm, and a solar plexus
in its sight. I have just seen a rabbit
peal fast into a sweater of weeds,

and to follow it, I am lifting
the pointiest finger
I have.