

The Poet's Essay – Peter Gizzi

GIZZI / SCHUYLER NOTES 9/17/23

The house was quiet and the world was calm.

*The words were spoken as if there was no book,
Except that the reader leaned above the page,*

*Wanted to lean, wanted much most to be
The scholar to whom his book is true, to whom*

The summer night is like a perfection of thought.

—Wallace Stevens

I love James Schuyler's poetry, its effortlessness and grace, its sound, its thick and at times gnarly descriptions. A palpable sense of irreality is everywhere present in it. His poems combine the attention of an ethnographic account with the charm of a great dinner guest. Add to this a private reading of the physical world imprinted on his nervous system. In his hyper-real descriptions colors shift; the words shimmer. The "violet sea" verges on the violent, there's a deeper cold behind the "gold and chilly" weather.

Reading James Schuyler is better than vacationing at the shore, or mountain retreat; in fact it is better than anywhere one could imagine. There, or rather here in his book, one visits with the imagination of a great poet whose art transforms us as it informs our relationship within our surroundings only to discover words are the landscape in which we want most to go. Modesty, fortunately, is not one of Mr. Schuyler's virtues and the world he artfully presents, as we are keenly aware in every line, is neither his nor ours, even when the recognition of the real in his observations is so stunning we can only acquiesce.

Objects are never as real in life as they appear in Schuyler's poems. One might say Schuyler is an objective surrealist interpolating flat reportage with hyper-descriptive elements.

The lilac leaves. The lilac trusses stand in bud. A cardinal
Passes like a flying tulip, alights and nails the green day
Down. One flame in a fire of sea-soaked, copper-fed wool:
A red that leaps from green and holds it there. . . .

(from "Hymn to Life," pg. 223)

It's as though his "outside" is the reading of an afterimage flashed upon the optic nerve creating a neurasthenic tableau whose colors shift, and in this polarization or synesthesia we find world and ourselves impressed (nailed down, taken aboard) in his process. In this activity—the need to capture—Schuyler is an ecstatic, perhaps even a religious thinker, though he is neither overtly moral nor pious. In these visions of excess, Schuyler is never a tourist. He is, however, profoundly genuine in his arduous humility to get it right.

There almost has to be a heaven! so there could be
a place for Bruno Walter
who never needed the cry of a baton.
Immortality—
in a small, dusty, rather gritty, somewhat scratchy
Magnavox from which a forte
drops like a used Brillo Pad?

(from "A Man in Blue" pg. 17)

And wonderfully, for us, in our significant need for refreshment which he quietly indulges, getting it right means he can run on to "camp" where fun *"is something more than beer and skittles, and the something more is a whole lot better than beer and skittles!"* But his sense of whimsy, like that of John Ashbery, can also reveal that life in a funhouse is anything but

fun. The nonsense in his poems can sometimes peek through to expose nature (and social orders alike) as empowered, terrifying and indifferent.

When Schuyler reviewed his lifetime friend Fairfield Porter's work in Art News in 1967 he wrote: "*The quotidian image is transfigured to pure paint.*" Replace "language" for "paint" and the same can be said of the transfiguration Schuyler enacts within his own medium. The title of the review "Immediacy Is the Message" is telling as well, as Schuyler is the master of the quick take. However it is more complicated than "first thought best thought" for Schuyler would sometimes take up to a year tinkering with a poem—getting it right. The surface of his poems has only an illusion of immediate and effortless description. His poems, like ethnographic accounts, read from a subject-position both inside and outside of the human activities and "weather" they track. And although a case can be made that he himself was an outsider, we continually find ourselves adopted within the natural and normative social intricacies he records as familiar. We know that James Schuyler suffered profoundly in his adult life, he was hospitalized several times for mental instabilities and in many ways, I feel, his work is that of a solitaire, recording the light outside a window—guest room, hospital room etc. You don't have to go digging. It's in the poems. His vivid rendering of the world is born out of a necessity to cohere, not merely for embellishment but as an act of sanity. Yet he is not simply inventing a locus for himself in his poems. The act is, in fact, far more sophisticated—it is description as event. An event which includes potentially everyone: the ominous cabby, a nurse, a failed lover from highschool, a newspaper boy, friends and family alike. All have a place within Schuyler's "camp," which remains complicated and thick. The event of the poem is a promise of salvation divested within the infinite possibility of forms.

In his book of essays *The Interpretation of Culture* the anthropologist Clifford Geertz illuminates the role of ethnography as "thick description." In Schuyler's case, we might substitute poet for ethnographer in the following quote: "*What the [poet] is in fact faced with is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon*

or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render: incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries. And this is true at the most down-to-earth, jungle field work levels of his activity: interviewing informants, observing rituals, eliciting kin terms, censusing households, [describing them] not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior." Indeed, his entire opus is full of "transient examples of shaped behavior," never "conventionalized graphs of sound." Ethnography is not so far off, considering the subject matter of Schuyler's poems, especially the long poems. Take almost any passage:

. . . I think with longing of my years in
Southampton, leaf-turning
trips to cool Vermont. Things should get better as you
grow older, but that
is not the way. The way is inscrutable and hard to handle.
Here it is
the Labor Day weekend and all my friends are out of town:
just me and some
millions of others, to whom I have not yet been introduced.
A walk in the
streets is not the same as a walk on the beach, by
preference, a beach
emptied by winter winds. A few days, and friends will
trickle back to
town. Dinner parties, my favorite form of entertainment.
Though in these
inflationary times you're lucky to get chicken in
place of steak.
What I save on meals I spend on taxis. Lately a lot

of cabs have
signs: NO SMOKING, PLEASE, or NO SMOKING DRIVER ALLERGIC.

A quiet smoke in
a taxi is my idea of bliss. Yes, everything gets more
restricted, less free.

(from "A Few Days" pg 361)

Not unlike Whitman, Schuyler believed that "*a freedom which excludes is less than free.*" ("Immediacy Is the Message"), and he has invented a form wherein we are free to come and go as we partake of the terms of its telling. His technique to create an open field was never more telling than when, in an important gesture near the end of his life, Schuyler came out in 1988 to give his first public reading. The line outside of the DIA Foundation was four abreast and was over a block long comprised of life-long devotees and younger readers. In short all the various clans turned out to participate in the masterful space of that event.

I want to share an early favorite poem of his. Read February:

FEBRUARY

A chimney, breathing a little smoke.
The sun, I can't see
making a bit of pink
I can't quite see in the blue.
The pink of five tulips
at five p.m. on the day before March first.
The green of the tulip stems and leaves
like something I can't remember,
finding a jack-in-the-pulpit

a long time ago and far away.
Why it was December then
and the sun was on the sea
by the temples we'd gone to see.
One green wave moved in the violet sea
like the UN Building on big evenings,
green and wet
while the sky turns violet.
A few almond trees
had a few flowers, like a few snowflakes
out of the blue looking pink in the light.
A gray hush
in which the boxy trucks roll up Second Avenue
into the sky. They're just
going over the hill.
The green leaves of the tulips on my desk
like grass light on flesh,
and a green-copper steeple
and streaks of cloud beginning to glow.
I can't get over
how it all works in together
like a woman who just came to her window
and stands there filling it
jogging her baby in her arms.
She's so far off. Is it the light
that makes the baby pink?
I can see the little fists
and the rocking-horse motion of her breasts.
It's getting grayer and gold and chilly.

Two dog-size lions face each other
at the corners of a roof.
It's the yellow dust inside the tulips.
It's the shape of a tulip.
It's the water in the drinking glass the tulips are in.
It's a day like any other.

In one sense “February” is composed as a painstakingly specific catalog of discrete images. Each line is a surprise, delighting in the pleasures of coincidence, like “the pink of five tulips/ at five p.m.” Gradually we progress through the city day to the dust inside the tulip, to the shape of the tulip, the container the tulip is in (a glass), and the container the glass is in (this day). The poem draws us from

1) the impalpability of the discrete units of matter; the fuzz of memory; the microscopic material of being; the “dust” inside the tulip;

2) to the shape of the tulip; its form (seemingly almost a platonic form—an ideal form—and yet here it is both symbolic and specific)

3) to the container; the context we can “place” it in; the context of the day, as the poet records the shifting of the light;

4) to the container of the poem, which can contain more than the day; the poetic tension between the beginning of matter—the baby being jogged on a hip—and the end of matter—the dust we become. The beauty of the tulip may draw us to observe it but inside it we see a reflection of what we ourselves are made of, just as we may see an image of our own childhood when we look in someone else’s window.

“February” is not a tranquil Romantic recollection; it is active observation that creates the effect of recollection. Schuyler exchanges a syntax of memory and judgment for a syntax of simultaneity. He uncouples his sentences, so that the electric spark must jump from noun to noun, and from event to event, no matter how disparate or seemingly unrelated. The gaps between his lines give us the experience of the passage of time, a verbal time-lapse

photography. Schuyler is a watcher. If you look out the window long enough you can actually “see” time pass as the light and colors of the world shift. In the first poem of his first book, John Ashbery wrote “Everything has a schedule, if you can find out what it is.” And one might say that in this poem “February” (the second poem of Schuyler’s first book, *Freely Espousing*), he does the work to disclose this invisible schedule, revealing the seemingly random syntax of the physical world.

This world as he presents it is both reassuring and unstable. The “day before March 1st” is not always February 28th and by not naming it—but naming what is next to it—he draws attention to this hinge of seasonal, temporal change, this “leap.” The poem is partly about this passage, getting over the hump of winter, as the truck disappears over the hump of the hill, or the speaker “can’t get over” his latest observation. And in this simple gesture nature, commerce, and human reason are intertwined. It is this interconnectedness that makes Schuyler’s poems reassuring in spite of the instability of their surface. And yet, as I said, reality is never as real as it is in a Schuyler poem. One has the sense of events and words being brought together out of necessity, to conduct a vision, giving the apparent randomness of living a sense of coherence and even inevitability.

The most striking aspect of reading Schuyler is the variousness of his craft, from short staccato lines to luxurious run-on sentences. The entire book creates an almost seamless vision of life as it is and as we see ourselves in it from a distance. To reread Schuyler’s poems is a rehearsal for an event we need always to possess—the promise of artistic excellence.

①

Speech Acts for a Dying World

A field sparrow
is at my window,
tapping at its reflection,
a tired
antique god
trying to communicate

it's getting to me

as I set out to sing
the nimbus of flora
under a partly mottled sky

as I look at the end
and sing so what,
sing live now,
thinking why not

I'm listening and
receiving now
and it feeds me,
I'm always hungry

when the beautiful
is too much to carry
inside my winter

when my library is full of loss
full of wonder

when the polis is breaking

when the shadows fall
in ripples, when
the medium I work in
is deathless and
I'm living inside
one great example
of stubbornness

as my head is stoved in
by a glance, as the day's
silver-tipped buds sway in union,
waving to the corporate sky

when I said work
and meant lyric

when I thought I was done
with the poem as a vehicle
to understand violence

I thought I was done
with the high-toned
shitty world

done with the voice and
its constituent pap

call down the inherited
phenomenal world
when it's raining in the book,
lost to the world
in an abundance of world

like listening to a violin
when the figure isn't native
but the emotion is

when everything is snow
and what lies ahead
is a mesmer's twirling locket

I thought I was done
with the marvel
of ephemeral shadow play,
the great design and all that

I thought I was done
with time, its theatricality,
glamour, and guff

gusting cloud, I see you,
I become you
in my solitary thinging,
here in partial light

when I said voice,
I meant the whole unholy grain of it,
it felt like paradise

meaning rises and sets,
now a hunter overhead
now a bear at the pole
and the sound of names

the parade of names

②

Now It's Dark

No one gave me a greater thing
than their time.
But the old song,
worn from use,
is with me again.
So much of it
behind me now.
In front of me a slow season,
when a face passes
into a name.
Last night the moon was lolling
9 degrees over the horizon
but I didn't know.
I was in a fever dream
downloading ravens into my skull.
An unkindness of them.
This is called what it's like
to sleep alone for years.
It means all these years to remain
untouched wrote the poem.
I use my mouth to say goodbye,
fever dream, raven, skull.
To say like a flower, little dust.
To say what of it.
The world is close today
and elegy is my tonic.
I recast language in hope
of recovering the red oak
my neighbors felled.
It lived over a hundred years, glowing.
Now, neither music or rhyme,
just night, tin, and sky.

The Present Is Constant Elegy

Those years when I was alive, I lived the era of the fast car.

There were silhouettes in gold and royal blue, a half-light
in tire marks across a field – Times when the hollyhocks
spoke.

There were weeds in a hopescape as in a painted back-
drop there is also a face.

And then I found myself when the poem wanted me in
pain writing this.

The sky was always there but useless – And what of the
blue phlox, onstage and morphing.

Chance blossoms so quickly, it's a wonder we recognize
anything, wanting one love to walk out of the ground.

Passion comes from a difficult world – I'm sick of twi-
light, when the light is crushed, time unravels its string.

Along the way I discovered a voice, a sun-stroked path
choked with old light, a ray already blown.

Look at the world, its veil.

Overtakelessness

after Albert Pinkham Ryder

To speak inaudibly, the outside,
its blurred sentence foreshadowed,
indistinguishable as shining brass.
The room, the empty sky, beautiful
or golden bands burn because it is empty.
Without depth of field birds become primitive again.
Unstuck weeds float downstream
completing representation.
A thick green complicating light.
Now face the horizon in silence.
Come down while gladness unbinds sleep
unlike silt. This quiet speech feels right
and will be imitated. To turn away,
to speak fondly without a history.
Come down and rediscover this ancient province
as persons exchange smiles like wind instruments.
There, unlike any road you travel,
are small tidings that awakening,
are pleasing. No history is clear.

④

Revival

for Gregory Corso (1930–2001)

It's good to be dead in America
with the movies, curtains and drift,
the muzak in the theater.
It's good to be in a theater waiting
for The Best Years of Our Lives to begin.
Our first night back, we're here
entertaining a hunch our plane did crash
somewhere over the Rockies, luggage
and manuscripts scattered, charred fragments
attempting to survive the fatal draft.
To be dead in America at the movies
distracted by preview music in dimming lights.
I never once thought of Alfred Deller
or Kathleen Ferrier singing Kindertotenlieder.
It's good to be lost among pillars of grass.
I never once thought of My Last Duchess
or the Pines of Rome. Isn't it great here
just now dying along with azaleas, trilliums,
myrtle, viburnums, daffodils, blue phlox?
It's good to be a ghost in America,
light flooding in at this moment
of never coming back to the same person
who knew certain things, certain people,
shafts of life entering a kitchen
at the end of an age of never coming back now.
To hear reports on the radio,
something about speed, they say, accelerated history.
It's good to share molecular chasm with a friend.
I never once reached for Heisenberg
or The Fall of the Roman Empire.

On this day in history the first antelope was born,
remember The Yearling, like that,
but the footage distressed, handheld.

A hard, closed, linear world at the edge
of caricature, no memory now of the New Science
or The Origin of the Species.
It's good to feel hunted in America.
To be the son of a large man who rose out of depression
and the middle world war, poverty and race
to loom in mid-sixties industrial American air,
survived classic notions of the atom,
to think to be. The official story walks
down the street, enters bars and cafes.
Plays. Airs. Stars. To sing a song of industry,
having forgotten Monty Clift was beaten
for reading Ulysses. It's dark in a theater,
hoping to say never return to the moment
of return, as a hollow ring from Apollo 13
sinks back to burn into the atmosphere
which made it, huh. How come all the best thoughts
are images? How come all the best images
are uncanny? What's the use of The Compleat Angler,
searching for effects at the bottom of a lake
next to a shoe slick with algae, at the base of a cliff
with pine needles and a rotting log?

I was talking about rending, reading, rewriting
what is seen. Put the book down and look into the day.
I want an art that can say how I am feeling
if I am feeling blue sky unrolling a coronation rug
unto the bare toe of a peasant girl
with vague memories of Jeanne d'Arc,
or that transformation in Cinderella.
Where is your mother today?
I think of you, soft skin against soot.
How much has the world turned
since you were a girl in Troy?
In these parts both widow and banker are diminished,
something outside the town defeated them.
In these parts neither possessed their life.
This pageant demands too much,

that we work and not break, that we love
and not lie, and not complain.
It's good to not break in America.
To behave this time
never once looking into Chapman's Homer,
or quoting the Vita Nuova translated
by Dante Rossetti. No, I am thinking
blurry faces, a boy, girl, looking
at New York harbor for a first time,
soil in pockets, missing buttons,
needing glasses, needing shoes.

It was war. A capital experience!
Investing in narratives of working up
from the mail room, basement, kitchen.
It's good to believe in the press kit
sailing away from rear-projection tenements
like a car ride after a good fix,
offset by attractively angled shots,
neo-cartoonish, with massive distorting close-ups,
part lockdown, part interest rate,
part plant, part machine. Part dazzle?
Lulls and high sensations.
I always wished I could be funny ha-ha,
instead of 'he's a little funny', if you get my drift,
just courage to accept the facts
that poetry can catch you in the headlights
and it's years refocusing the afterimage,
the depth and passion of its earnest glance.
This part untranslatable, part missing line,
feather in the chest. A description
to account for the lack of detail
the Wealth of Nations conducts on the organs.
We look forward to serving you here
at Managed Health Network.
Thank you for calling, call volume
is still exceptionally heavy. If this is an emergency...

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All the codes have been compromised.
This is why the boy can't fathom polar lights,
liberty, merry dancer.
Ineluctably the privileged nostalgia of a toy boat.
In the diagram did the vessel survive?
Like an old book, even a beloved book,
its pages give way to a good sneeze.
What have they done, I sit here thinking
of your monuments, trophies, hahahaha.
'Here are my flowers',
what do they smell like? 'Paper.'
This is why athenaeum joy, why shiny pathos
intoning the letters, prance and skater,
o say, can you see?
What does it mean to wait for a song
to sit and wait for a story?
For want of a sound to call my own
coming in over the barricades,
to collect rubble at the perimeter
hoping to build a house, part snow, part victory,
ice and sun balancing the untrained shafts,
part sheet music, part dust, sings often -
the parts open, flake, break open, let go.
Why so phantom, searching for a rag
to embellish the holes in my sonnet,
no tracks leading beyond and back,
no more retrograde song cycle tatting air.
These parts wobble, stitching frames
to improvise a document:
all this American life. Strike that.
All our life, all our American lives gathered
into an anthem we thought to rescue us,
over and out. On your way, dust.

Beginning with a Phrase from Simone Weil

There is no better time than the present when we have
lost everything. It doesn't mean rain falling
at a certain declension, at a variable speed is without
purpose or design.

The present everything is lost in time, according to laws
of physics things shift
when we lose sight of a present,
when there is no more everything. No more presence in
everything loved.

In the expanding model things slowly drift and
everything better than the present is lost in no time.

A day mulches according to gravity
and the sow bug marches. Gone, the hinge cracks, the
gate swings a breeze,
breeze contingent upon a grace opening to air,
velocity tied to winging clay. Every anything in its
peculiar station.

The sun brightens as it bleaches, fades the spectral value
in everything seen. And chaos is no better model
when we come adrift.

When we have lost a presence when there is no more
everything. No more presence in everything loved,
losing anything to the present. I heard a fly buzz. I
heard revealed nature,
cars in the street and the garbage, footprints of a world,
every fly a perpetual window,
unalloyed life, *gling*, pinnacles of tar.

There is no better everything than loss when we have
time. No lack in the present better than everything.

In this expanding model rain falls
according to laws of physics, things drift. And every-
thing better than the present is gone
in no time. A certain declension, a variable speed.
Is there no better presence than loss?
A grace opening to air.
No better time than the present.

Wintry Mix

The 6 a.m. January
encaustic clouds
are built
in a waxy gray putty
whizzing by with spots
of luminous silvery
crack-o'-the-world light
coming through, an eerie
end-o'-the-world feeling
yet reassuring
like an old movie.
Do I really have to go out there?
Now a hint of muted
salmon tones breaking
a warmish band
of welcoming pinkish light.
Is it like this every morning?
My head still in the dark.
Worry, eck! But the brightening
russet tipped cloud ballet
reminds me of something
in Pliny, yeah, Pliny.
Can't imagine opening
the door today in a toga.
Work and more,
yes, work
sends us into the draft.

Bolshevescent

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You stand far from the crowd, adjacent to power.
You consider the edge as well as the frame.
You consider beauty, depth of field, lighting
to understand the field, the crowd.
Late into the day, the atmosphere explodes
and revolution, well, revolution is everything.
You begin to see for the first time
everything is just like the last thing
only its opposite and only for a moment.
When a revolution completes its orbit
the objects return only different
for having stayed the same throughout.
To continue is not what you imagined.
But what you imagined was to change
and so you have and so has the crowd.

True Discourse on Power

When I say the ghost has begun
you understand what is being said.
That time is not how we keep it
or measure
first there was then wasn't...
It twitters and swerves like
the evening news.
Now outside is 3D. Inside non-
representational space.
Every law has an outside
and inside
I have witnessed cruelty
break and gulp and sweat then
punch out a smile.
To be awake. This talking in space.
To be absorbed in the ongoing.
Belief's a shadow to be looked into
and into
until relief is gone. The dark
triangle settled in the midst of
traffic is on us.
Time comes in adverbial bursts,
a glass of beer, a smoke ...
The evening air refreshes, startles,
and the questions grow deeper like
shadows across storefronts.
A forsythia ticking against
the dirty pane.
This was time. Up. Down. Up.
And you were a part of it.
If I say it can you feel it now?
Imagine. Lightning strikes. Rain
falls and drives.
Clouds pass. Night clarified. Stars.

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In silent pictures the tree falls
in the optic nerve.
The sound is chemistry.
There's no getting to it or if
getting to it
feels like the actual sound
is that silence?
Alone here with my shadows
drawn ...
So what's this about?
A horse and a castle, a tree
and its leaving?
What's this about in solitary
splendor?
The undertow and its threshold,
a door and the opening sky?
Or because a play of reflection
lit up my bumper
and caught my eyes
I saw the shadow of a falcon.
Because a sound a poor man
uttered
reached my ear I fell into song.
If the syntax of loyalty is not tragic
then what is the wager?
If there were time, would it be ours?

Night Work

The eyes take their relief in dark
in this night room seeing things.

The waking dark old-like
a monk's pagoda in some far bell country never seen.

To have never seen it in me ringing
the night room the gone steps creaking ens.

To remain like this
what the world wants.

The motor fumbles in the distance
anything becomes rhythm in the distant wave.

You can ride it if you can hear it
the whine of night the ongoing ribbon.

Rainy Days and Mondays

Over the all this and
under the all that

between this yes
and that yes

hauntedness

between the girl
and arrows

the long ago
and far away

between galaxy
and litter

talking to myself
for now

a song

Instagrammar

These lost stars
tomorrow
will they be
there when we
wake in our
sorrow, is it us
so lost in the
moment,
is it today
we look
to flower

If it were
because the time
we saw and
loved, if it was
because we are
and should be
this, the way
it was then, we
find it glowing

this our future
and bravado

We say how
could this be
when did this
happen that
we'll find ourselves
somewhere else
in some future
laughing, why
is it incompatible
I mean what does
it matter, whether
the ship were in
the trees or
the ground was
in the water

The stars doubled
in the river
the stars once
floating in past
futures we ran

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to, if it all
seems dizzy
and mayhem
if it all seems
promised and
ordained

Our future is
in the air

A Ghosting Floral

To be dispatched
by downcast eyes

To have forgot
a singularity in green

It's not what you think
when I look

The vista suits me

Loam fanning out
into music falling

Shadows wheel

Wings drafting above
doing it finding it

The day suits me

13

The air inside me
inside you, things

Do not move
let the wind speed

Creeley Song

all that is lovely
in words, even
if gone to pieces
all that is lovely
gone, all of it
for love and
autobiography
as if I were
writing this
hello, listen
the plan is
the body and
all of it for love
now in pieces

(4)

all that is lovely
echoes still
in life & death
still memory
gardens open
onto windows
lovely, the charm
that mirrors
all that was, all
that is, lovely
in a song

(15)

Nimbus

in this hand
a chromosome
the mystery
of the ordinary
becoming
the me in I
a rosary
ready to turn
a hunger
for real things
like a wave
to salute
the real
when twilight

comes on
breathe in
breathe out
an archetype
calling to it
the earth
in orange light
a regalia
of lost music
no more
alive than me
this is not
a small poem
everything
in starlight
thin snow
fragile and

(16)

dream-lapsed
warped by wind
or anything
made of waves
like my body
and the rest
of the day
Monday
and April
pierced
like an echo
outlasting me
as if nothing
could polish
the sky
where the present
and phantom touch

where mirrors etc.
turn like weather
it's so random
becoming a self
the secret
to my own
piece of sky
behaving as
clouds do
another day
a macular blue
white, steel
a swatch of green
the afternoon
reflected green
wavy, transparent
and shadows

17

turn nothing
to nothingness
enter the O
in breath
an antiquity
of thought
a notebook opens
there are windows
in the notebook
and a road
birds, houses
trees, etc.
hunger
for the word
flower
where bees
work the bell

it is the I
that creates
a world
accepting rain
and punishment
the yellows
and oranges
the green time
the physical
some days
it's a blue world
a buzz of flies
somewhere music
this dance
of the actual
giving itself
to the eyes

18

a reflecting surface
designed
for survival
every glance
some circumference
of shadow
calling into
the psyche's
paper-blue
hieratic light
cardinals flaunt
their red into
a gentle rain
soft and constant
when elsewhere
becomes
an image

a thing
to live with
a worn feeling
an old force
softening glass
is there more
sadness in beauty
than beauty
in sadness
the fluorescent
afternoon sang