

When the humans disappoint,  
the sunflower tells its droll stories,  
two about the princess who is no beauty,  
her sly heart never won, but she gives it –  
or something like it – to the blacksmith,  
the fool, at times the very air, her hips  
wider than most minds, with their need  
for roses, happy endings – any ending at all.  
Most times that's me, alas, as when I water  
the sunflower, do my chores, as if thereby  
I tidy all. As a boy I thought if I was good  
they'd love me, those who seemed to say God  
grabs pencil and paper when you die, tabulates,  
then scratches His exquisite head (the rules  
a bore, poor Dear). Better the sunflower,  
so quiet when not telling stories. Rules?  
But yesterday, perched high, the sunflower seemed  
regal in evening sun, ready to prophecy the vast-all  
a seed-heavy voluptuary must know, its Fibonacci bulge  
a sort of Buddha. Of course, He too told stories –  
another creature fat with light and seed and death.

When the humans disappoint,

I read another book, another repetition  
of ink and paper, each letter a tool

designed for work the gods took back  
and we were left with meanings.

In a wingback chair, beneath a lamp's  
long neck arced as if to peer into

the pool of light it spills, I sit with  
a book like all the others, the way

when open in my hands it makes  
the vee the geese take as they go.

All books are one book if you  
do not know them, each an accusation

made precise, fussy, the crispness of its *no*.  
But if you know books, you find their likeness

elsewhere, as when one night a lover sees  
in the looming mirror his thrusts as ancient,

as is the answering rise of his lover's hips,  
her head turned to the side – as she looks

over her shoulder, to see trailing far  
the creatures, all the way back to first blood.

When the humans disappoint,

we show species-hubris, as with those  
space-alien flicks, each of which presumes  
strange creatures new to the planet will aim

straight for the humans, rather than the more  
obvious choices, say bacteria, for which we are  
mobile domiciles, and cozy. The little wretch

who made the joke about a woman being  
a support system for a pussy blundered  
into a clue he won't get, victim of need

and point of view, that redundance. Still,  
another's stupidity is an old pal as soon  
as he buys a round or offers a line to snort.

That he makes things seem simple when  
they are weird – alas, we understand  
the strategy, given our own stories about

childhood, or that midrash with Odysseus  
as forebear, daddy of psyche's favorite shapes,  
and into them one spills this life's particulars,

like sloshing Coke into a chalice. Speaking  
of jokes: one of our fellow subatomic amalgams –  
he called the birth of all "The Big Bang," as if

it were a prank. I agree with Arnaldo the Poet,  
who said Everything came from Nothing when  
a confused god went everywhere at once.

When the humans disappoint,  
I offer myself the gift of a fat bunch  
of gladiolas, brazen pink ones, a snub  
to my own aesthetics. Why have opinions  
if you can't poke fun, mocking yourself with  
some sentimental flowers, for instance these,  
one move shy of effervescing into the cloud  
Cupid rides, appearing in his cheeks  
as a blush that is for all we know a rich  
embarrassment, as he thinks to himself,  
*This work is better with beetles.*  
With them you see more clearly the need,  
honest without the romance and hors d'oeuvres,  
the music that is noise, after all, turning  
rhapsodic as it falls in love with time,  
like some woman ragged with fur at her crotch  
she sculpts smooth in black silk pulled taut.  
She thinks she dresses for her lover. I think  
Cupid cackles as she adorns her lips in red,  
the decorated mouth suggestive of the other,  
alluvial, the species' history held there  
between high ridges of bone, where her hips  
rise then flare into the hills far away.

When the humans disappoint,

nonetheless, notes one's inner-rhetorician,  
they made this '57 Karmann Ghia, as innocuous  
as the Buddha's belch. Parked between a Subaru  
and a Chevy van, perfection finds humility and

loves the world with a fleck of rust on a headlight rim,  
like Nelson Riddle's arranging a mistake into  
every Sinatra tune, or Hitchcock appearing  
those few frames in his movies, as if to show

he could make beauty, but not be it.  
It is all the things that come to mind  
that is its richness, this car at rest, a car  
worthy of the name *vehicle*. Oh blackness

shining at least one thought past our  
usual needs – finding a mate and food and shelter.  
And often enough, each of those leads  
straight to the others, so when you arrive

you don't know what you got, the self  
mobius, fun to model but hell to have.  
Yes fine but: behold this 1957 Karmann Ghia,  
lubed by a mortal, licensed by the state,

insured by a corporation, taxed by the feds  
as if it's only a car, polished by an otherwise  
unemployed teen with hopes but no dreams,  
ticketed by insouciant meter maids, snubbed

by aging carboys, shat upon by pigeons as if  
substance is substance is substance. However,  
as the Ghia reveals, what's so wrong with that?  
*Praise God*, as Blind Willie sang it, *I'm satisfied*.