

## Paestum

Almost dinner.  
Tangerine spills across imperfect columns  
in suspended motion,  
the *tuffatore* hovering just off-vertical  
over the line-black horizon;  
the grass, precision lit,  
rendered sharp-leafed in  
vivid translucence.

*Did Greeks have dandelions?*

We make chains of them on the temple slope,  
and the pagan gods forgive us our impudence.  
But not so Hera, she watches us  
run piggy-backed along eggshell roads,  
then returns to pasta-rolling.

This is Roxaboxen, these  
grey-speckled stones  
laid out for us goat kids to leap across.

*Lava ripples below, don't fall in.*

Foot-sure, giddy with our own invulnerability,  
we hopscotch. A shot echoes, firecracker sharp;  
we screech and scatter like feather-ruffled pigeons.

Water buffalo look up. They low patiently;  
a thousand years later, neither we nor they are anything new.  
Knee-deep in wind-rippled grass,  
we run, turning cartwheels,  
scrambling up imperturbable rocks,  
bounding down, falling, rolling.  
We gather in bunches, skip-raising dust.

When we leave  
before dusk,  
the temples hold our laughter.

## February

Thick dense bread with peanut butter  
and apples. Children skip down rocks  
to see the bronze mermaid. Ducks  
fly suddenly over the pointed berm.  
Snow rests soft white on river ice;  
behind the ferry, water appears sharp dark.  
Far off, grey clouds drift from smokestacks,  
rising straight, despite wind gusting round  
like harbor foam.

Along the Strøget, light glimmers  
off the pavement—pink, yellow, blue—  
bright beside the gathering dusk and  
between dark gridded cobblestones.  
The sunset waits behind the clouds,  
only slow darkening shows the night.  
Copper green dragons watch  
from the stock exchange.  
The snow prickles where it falls  
and glove seams rub, a suede itch  
caught between fingers.

## The Boy Runs Past The Calder

The boy runs past the Calder to the shadowed doorway.  
I do not know where it leads.

The Calder moves slowly.  
Three fins on two arms  
in the wind circling clockwise:  
black, white, blue.

The boy runs beneath it.  
Precocious, stubborn-faced  
he does not slow,  
does not look up at the legs:

Two matte black and well behaved;  
The third, bent like folded paper:  
white, yellow, blue.

*Big Crinkly*, it says, 1969.

The boy's head almost touches it, but not quite.  
His sister, better behaved,  
does not run like he does.  
Wide-eyed, she watches the Calder point to the sky.  
The boy's mother pushes him back towards the sculpture.  
He does not want to stay.

Their shadows cross.  
The sun squashes the Calder's against the pavement.  
You cannot see its arms.  
The boy's makes a long smudge.  
You cannot see his arms either.  
For a moment, they overlap—  
The boy's shadow, the Calder's.  
Movement blurs; the boy breaks off, dashes away.

He runs back to the door.  
I do not know where it leads.

## **Marino's Horse**

*Cavallo, 1947*

The horse balks.  
He pushes his body back, further.  
His neck is tight-stretched forward,  
teeth bared, lips peeled back in pain.  
Picasso could have drawn them.  
On his neck you've slashed deep scars  
with Fontana's knife. On his rump too.  
Bleached white beneath dark bronze,  
like scratches on old cowhide.  
His tail is cropped short like a warhorse.  
His mane as well. Perhaps he has seen battle.  
Perhaps that is why he is in pain.  
The hoof-beaten dirt gathers tightly  
beneath him. His legs attenuate,  
Elongated like the necks of Parmigianino's  
Madonna and Modigliani's women.  
There is no rider. Perhaps he has fallen already,  
like the others. Perhaps the horse  
is protecting his master: perhaps that is why  
his teeth are bared. He watches me  
through small eyes twisted sideways.  
They protrude from his head.  
His ribs make faint undulations in his sides.  
He blows hot air. I cannot calm him  
as I approach; his anxiety seeps  
against crisp white walls:  
a stark tableau of pressed-back  
horse and wide-mouthed fear and  
dense heaving breath and  
nothing to fight.