

FIVE CLIMATES

Directions

Proceed
directly,
always,
to the node
of pain.
Where
you're
needed.

Thought alone
never
saves you—
only cata
clysmic
aftershock,
seismic after
thought,
pain-level,
“infinity.”

Withstand this stream,
discomfiting
disclosure—
to live.

Evade, avoid—
and you dis
solve--anti
matter, anti
self--what you
prided
yourself
tran
scending.

Ecology

With each family
its own fragile ego-
system, lost in privacy,
its own idiom, architecture
of the house, support,
strain, loving—
rupture.

Decorous
houses distributed playfully
across landmass @ horizon,
households on vicissitudes
pending—
market, infrastructure,
petroleum, H₂O, all estate
of the Real.

Wind still raining
down on stressed families
as they banter, carrying
off dust, unresolved
scores.

While their out
croppings, who burbled
in nursery, infil-
trate the schools,
sapping

whatever remains
of decorum, holdover,
lost epoch of memory,
deciphering, decoding
patterns scratched faintly by the past
in the dirt, single key remaining
to prospects awaiting.

Powerful winds rifle
through these parts--new
dustbowl.

Lost Lines

I will never retrieve
you but that doesn't
matter; compared to what you were
when thought, you could only be
seaweed.

The sea keeps no
promises, but that is the hope
it spreads, like
pockets in a billiards table
at nerve's end.

The well is invisible—
that is why its presence
weighs so on the nerves, why
lines are relinquished in its
memory.

The bucket hangs
halfway up the well, its apparatus
broken, neglected
by the servers.

Collective Dream of the Baseball Stadium

Late enough in the game,
all the secret signs played out,
covert maneuvers under the August sun,
intimations, shadow stealing
across the display
ringed field.

Burly hurler still cranking out sliders.
Slip & speed make every swing
a desperate guess, taunting question
mark; every piddling foul,
3rd base line, already a testament
to faith. Again and
again a steeltrap
arm snaps--
to vengeance.

This is the moment—
game settles into game;
crowds in sheer joy transported beyond politics;
to revel in detail simply for the thrill, form and precision;
aesthetics of the occasion takes command;
eerily attuned, each player, to function and role.
1000 conversations lose their shrill but don't tail off;
deep shot to center still springs us to our feet,
all eyes, throaty in glee and wonder.

Luxuriating in insouciance, a vagrant
loon defers endlessly in her landing,
any of 50,000 lakes
Maine to Minnesota to Colorado.
By no means insensible
to the allure of her own style—
to her own Baroque plume embroidery,
to an encantado subduing all habitation
within hearing, her cry. Not even
the despoilers
impervious
to this spell.

Inviolable,
timeless struggle,
pitcher's wiles,
batter's reflex
wizardry—

Until the lastlast pitch,
mythic struggle careens
toward resolution,
our myth, embedded
in even longer
narrative.

Nestled, sleepy
hollow, summer's
afternoon. Gently,
myth deplanes us.

What Has Been

Rice-stalks bowed
to the omnivorous wind.
Night brooks no horizon.
This is in the *before*.
Before probity plunked
down its cenotaph on
marshes moaning
with life.

Gleeful lover tear-asses
through alleys blasted
in the rice, coastal
winds prevailing, driving—
Anarchy of sex planted, squarely,
on the lurid bottom
of processing, registered
under no certificate,
no seal, in a bower
underground.

Nocturnal stalks

outshining midday sunray,
pitched at photo-realism's finest grain,
rising to each sown seed's
singular splendor; thatched
roofs, gold brocade, hanging
from a loom.

Sex-craved partners,
already in process, being forgotten,
bend to the kamikaze wind,
besotted in radiance, fecundity.
“Onibaba's” premise, timeless
enchantment.

Back on the *grands boulevards*,
cosmopolitan capitals
garble their messages, sort
their zones out, stake
out national claims

on moment & monument.

Aimless

crowds, strictly a pickup
game, randomly saunter,
no central magnetism
patterns their filing.

In the name of the nameless,
we brave inconvenience, the traffic,
to gawk in a blacked-out
cavern brimming with strangers
at throngs of no particular
provenance or meaning. This wasn't
in the script, high-blown drama, trip
wire thrillers, not even the
taut thigh tendered
in perfection.

Those Lumières

nailed it, scraggly relays
greet the immortal train
stuttering into La Ciotat.
The enduring wonder—
Victorian finery sported,
its own *Lebenswelt*,
far outclasses the miracle,
the train's *specter*,
scandal of pictorial
motion traced out as
billowing
plume.

It took a Barthes to formulate
pathos in this unrepentant state—
aggravated vitality in
evanescence: “Every photograph
is a certificate of presence . . .
a new embarrassment
its invention has introduced
into the family of images. . . .
Here are Polish soldiers resting
in a field. Nothing extraordinary,
save this, no realist
painting would give me:
they were there.

What I see, not memory,
imagination, reconstitution,
a piece of Maya—reality
in a past state: at once
past & real.”

Those milling crowds,

vacuous, persistent—
cinéma nouveau seized
on their centrality--
Paris still digging out, war
& genocide. Ghastly
presences haunting
Rohmer’s Monceau
bakery; under Godard’s *régi*,
dogging those coddled
“children of Marx & Coca
Cola” into their frame.
And in the tender-stark cine-
parlance Truffaut’s signature,
they play Greek chorus
to Antoine the surrogate,
trading 400 boyhood
shocks for stolen
kisses.

You were there
too, dissolving into the
“what was,” ambling, just being
there, picked up by a street throng
wrenching itself into focus,
flock of human flamingoes,
evolving habitat frozen--
film, tape, whatever, playing
wallpaper to some domestic
melodrama, momentous political happening,
urgency by now completely lost—
Capri, “L’avventura,” jutting
its chin in the Middle
Sea.

All bowed before the unrelenting wind—
history, fashion, yearning--
forgetting.

Revelation

My mother was born in black villages,
dark like the pall of their mountains,
like the open maws of their snorers,
their only Delphic
oracles.

Gold is the glow of the honey
smeared on the letters of the scrolls
to sweeten the bite of schooling,
slashing tongues,
androgynous
tatpoles.

No reserve or finesse in the licking,
in the mist wheezed
down upon cracked
letters, in the moans of dreamers.
Once in the life of a soul
the heavens open. This sweet
ness must do for a life
time.

My mother went up to the mountains
whose shadows felled forests of forgetting,
she went up to the bird-nest convents,
where history plops and hatches.
She went up in the absence of pea sprouts
to take violin lessons. Black
were the habits of her teachers. At
Christmas they offered her
sugarplums.

My mother bore generations of
madmen. Saw only cryptic
letters dreaming of *mother*,
trembled at the thought of misprints
creeping in from the margins.
Among her disappointments—
one of many,
minor.

My mother died remote--
at elevation. Procession
of images before her. Image
folding into image and pausing
no more than an instant
for reflection.