

Instar

– *A stage in the life of an arthropod between two successive molts.*

Merriam Webster

In Star, as though the celestial resides in the biological, as though every scuttling beetle, every wriggling maggot carries within it a sun, a Sirius, a supernova, a Betelgeuse, as though the Big Bang itself was merely a molt, the shedding of a skin, the crack of a chrysalis through which the adult emerges, and that every quark and quasar thus liberated is the fifteen-billion-year unfolding of diaphanous wings – the mystery, like a butterfly without a mouth, that cannot feed but flies, only to lose itself in love, and then dies.

Immersion

All around me, languages
I do not understand –

conjugations of leaves,
syntax of sun.

A hummingbird slips
a note under my door.

Spider webs flicker
like signal mirrors in the grass.

I don't bother with the past
perfect or future conditional.

The present takes
all that I have.

I listen. I repeat.
I listen. I repeat.

I dream of fluency.
I will settle for conversation.

A Question of Punctuation

Have you ever noticed how the slow children
on the unpunctuated *Slow Children* sign
look really fast, like four-four in the forty fast,
like Renaldo Nehemiah fast, if you remember him,
a black man in the eighties jumping over white hurdles
higher than my hip, which I am not, though I did
join my first drum circle last night, rap-a-tap-a-tapping
on an empty Folgers can that wasn't even a can
but just a plastic can-shaped receptacle smelling
nothing of coffee but painted red white blue purple –
a veritable rainbow, like the folks in my circle,
dreadlocked and tattooed, a trustafarian jamboree
smelling of patchouli and old sweat, the kind of smell
that makes you wonder if these are the slow children
that the signs talk about, people just cruising by,
nowhere to go, nothing to do, their heads in the clouds,
but, damn, with hands as fast as lightning?

On Aging

I did not know childhood was a spell.

- Larry Levis

And that one day the incantation would wear off
that all the princes would turn back into frogs
that the rabbit would jump back into the black depths
of an even blacker hat, that someday, somebody
would drop the crystal ball and from then on I would walk
without shoes, pulling shards from the soles of my feet.

But after the scarred years, comes a time of white magic,
a time of wizened rabbits laughing, of old frogs singing
spells from the belly of the pond. With the shards
I make stained glass. With the blood on my fingers
I paint my face. Now I am a clown dancing,
abracadabra, the only word I know.

Beep Beep

I want to rip the veil of time
crawl inside and find what's possible.
If light travels 300 million meters per second
then I just need to run faster. I'll probably want
new shoes. And if matter pops in and out of existence
on a whim, then I want to know where it goes
and where it's been. From whence does positron flesh
arise? *Energy*, they say. But from what candle
and what wick? Who strikes the match?
And who blows it out? If you bend space-time
you can make a ball, a hole, a hyperbolic sheet.
Then why not a unicorn? An elf? A white-
bearded god? I'm tired of short-sightedness.
I'm tired of no. Give me a paintbrush.
I'm going to paint a hole in the wall
and like Roadrunner, I'm going through.