

drifting attention

after Michael Palmer, *Alagon*

1.

It's been summer for a day
I have little access to myself
abruptly proud as she showed us
what never was

 bending
 blue spine
 doors
 light chamber air
memory tumble things seem.

2.

world terms appear
 three visitors had
 differently asking
surrounded by
 night always

3.

thin length of ideas
traces window
enough unimaginable
as it was begun
echoes torn hand
time ladders lines
air clearly moves
 page intervals afternoon
others again
useless interest

4.

this will reach you
paperback
a decision
glass shaved perhaps
error
nothing to fear
the sun afterwards
pages

EAST PEAK

after Laurie Scheck

One day you find a dog wandering the street
with a ragged plastic rope
and it doesn't want you skitters away as you reach over
like a kid stumbling around the classroom
his cellphone ringing and his grammar is bad
but even worse doesn't have words for his virtues
this day when the sleepless edge of night crawls out of your muscles
dislocated your foot falls over the rock
and your ankle gives way for you to welcome the earth
under your shoulder hard and right hip and hand heel bruised
but you can run again within a day you figure
that you can bounce back hit the pavement like rubber
as you're wandering around the house filled with
what you've collected and stored and no longer have room for
can't remember the meanings of these clippings
and chotchkes and magazines why you've kept this and that
those jars of pennies spilling over the shelf and the dust
and cobwebs lacing over the pages and books and shoes
after you listen to the scraping of rose branches against the window
the sounds of pigeons perched on the wire song birds in your trees
butterflies landing in the backyard scrubby earth
berry bushes holding forth a territory of fitness
blossoms of white pink before the clusters
ripen

*

the air's embrace of morning emptiness
without the wound of brilliant sun
words and all that matters, longing
a rock and tree love the earth
forgive strangeness
bitter innocence of movement
as the light opens
rest and remember
whatever you want.

LESSON IN JAIL

Cold brittle light falls upon shadows of walls and faces
the memories of these walls ease desire
erase pain
echo the voices and whispers and silence spoken.

*

blast of smoky air
heartwreck in the wind
deserted rush away and tear through lies and promises
what we do not have surely
a rainy day without rain
no balloons drifting
the set of knees
clenched muscled hands.

*

Her boyfriend got arrested
they're only kids,
 "I feel paralyzed," she says
music smokes lines into my hands
a soft night, jasmine air
I remember the frenzy of cliché
desperate to find out
dotted lights arranged in the sky
 voices could touch this paper.

drifting attention

COLUSA

Today I was thinking of calling you it was a bright afternoon,
finished with my haircut off Solano,
near Peet's Coffee at the intersection of a street called *Colusa*
a gold rush town, words like *loose*,
close rolling easy off my tongue....

then later arriving home to find your poem describing the same place,
but some other moment
when you were there and thought of calling,
but not calling--punctuation suspended,
held preciously golden as we let words and thoughts slip over our mouths
those kisses and champagne in our glasses bubbling...

as the warm sun cracks light over trees in the parking lot
where neither of us have ever visited before,
but now it's the same place we'll remember
crystal in the shape of our hands
the taste of grass-soaked sunlight, cold mountain roads,
champagne kisses flooding our room one morning.

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*You have this need to tell your story
except you cannot remember what it is*

Sam Shepard

When you make it up
you remember what you need to tell.

I swear nothing
mumbling a silent landscape

Their feet move in the slush
remote music plays
young girls always take chances.

Remember hitchhiking, thumbs extended
no destination, taking rides from strangers
the road yields
an escape route

Honey and Rose diner
while deer far off
cross a highway in the snow
what goes on without saying,
stories

go on
I'll tell it all
if you let me.