

SCHOOL DAYS

Can't find a place for the word
coercion. I would love someone to tend to
possible mastodons in my rising sign.
Susannah drinks kombucha
aloe vera juice, to unite her gourd.
This is not like life
among the millions of articulate.
We've been patted down
for public or private lyricism
and must leave the fragments on the doorstep.
Weight in the air from a distant bell
I don't know the reason for.
O king of kings,
what is the mind
behind the golden voice?

AT THE SCHNEEMANS'

I was waiting for a glimpse of the earthly paradise
in Katie's cookie tin, how human
drying pantyhose on hangers, building harpsichords
but don't bother George with Couperin
he's already off assembling something else
for George is a man in two worlds
lest he repeat himself under the terrible olive trees
their pleasant shadows torn apart by wild boar
attenzione! saints get off your knees!
beyond a blue abyss, the sun's final edition
crosses the threshold, just as our talk
catches on in the old manner
like an empty piazza slowly filling with horses

IMPROVEMENT LICK RUN

for Philip Whalen

A lick is a deposit of salt left behind
when a salt spring evaporates
a grainy threshold impossible to disrupt
it is called a lick
because deer and other animals
lost in thought
lick such a spot
no meaning on its own

Apparently, someone improved on the lick
Mother Nature placed here
objects arranged against a horizon
dwindling spring ephemerals
kneeling around breaking with the ranks
 there is a green heron hiding and seeking
 plucking insects from twigs
hunger is part of my congestion
 to know something dependent on its context
well, the whole is blinding
 seeds cracking come into other things
I am tired for the stars
 though I love a summary
 stand on top of it
 to see the next hill
 a perch for destiny
 it hasn't been long since I got my start
I could think or I did
 drawing air down
 holding those places aloft
 I am only one person, never been furious
with daylight, so rehearsed in the old trees
their weeping aberrations everything I want to know
 breaks my concentration
and I'm weary from the legwork

The first time the Buddha
had wind in my hair
on that mountain
and could see the other mountains
but not the energy to climb
answering the questions I ask

Where I am who can see me?
I know my station
the moon
falls out of the sky
clocks eat batteries get some sleep
it's cheaper than flying
to visit the hieroglyphs
what do they say about the heart of a man?

Would you like to live again?
I see you in the sun
with the burning calendar

Another dreamer in the dream
told me love is an ace
on its own celestial air
but I don't want love to mess me up
with Aquarian thoughts
so I worked out the origin of consciousness
wrote it all down Improvement
Lick Run
but can you name these flowers?
a number in the gloom
the neighbor cuts them for her ikebana
I like just so much of each element

Jessica Dessner