

It amused us
those mornings woken early
to discover names and invent
decidedly human capacities

for the animals, birds
landmarks, light
breezes and the astounding
variety of plants.

So we grew into our lives
godlike, with gods
as companions
and the origins of science
our whim. A shivery, silky

suddenness, delicious
thrill of recognition

surprised us
in everything

till aging
who could quibble
with what had been so vivid
now almost

transparent, our daring assumptions
faded in the old books
to headings, attic
definition

emphatic of a precipitous sadness
we had no stomach for, no means

to divine.

AND INVENT

What's known next to sun on water
smuggled under a cloud cover

between the low islands? Reverie
and the immediate

arrow of fire at you, Apollo's
heroic arm, a hand up—

fate's finger, little man!
You're the one so sing

your little song. Skip
the light fandango. Think fast

in that frenzy become
a world order, ascendance

of the particle, small star, electron
glitz: a Liberace encore, litter

lifted heavenward, sky sheen
and the sea's implacable mercury

to suckle and soothe, sucking under
gods' pups battling the burlap.

DECIDEDLY

"That sky," you exclaim —
"Tintoretto," and I

"Maxfield Parrish," with whom
we usually conclude sky-

wise to those deepening shades
(tone is better) of blue.

Not Tintoretto, we know
but Italian. Florence —

her singular cypresses here
and there on the hills, night's tapers

of dark before it is quite
fallen. "Darker than Parrish,"

I venture. But who and the one star?
Horizon no brush could so succinctly

illuminate. A knife's work? A night's
prescient echo in vaulted —

you know the colour — that confident
slide up-scale of the low

note, hallowed old cave
of the Good and the True

we were born to, strive for, never so
habitable, goddess

brightening through the window
enrobed, unenshrouded, bedded

on a velvet virtù
might proudly have had under

her, or art nouveau smooth
toward latex, the subtlest

tint present but waning
of sentiment (pretty

as a poster) But voluptuous.
Emphatic. That sky.

LANDMARKS, LIGHT

The solstice
and such sun sprung
from heelstone, druidic

stolidity against
the Ionian mirror
as gods send searing
noonward, hot-footing it via

wild meadow, Delphic window, table a still-life
of honey, goat's yogurt, prone pencil — intent

upon their architecture, the hour's Acropolis
consecration of marble the colour

of moonlight. Enshrined

in the fine lines decipher
illusion of time
on our hands, bands

of high cloud, someone torching
the pyres, her sciatica
acting up where he alights

all eloquence, flies

in the face of Rendition. The Classics are easy compared with restoring these twisted French doors.

They almost close

and open to the mountain in the east
with one name

and the mountain westward
without one

the endlessly complex and changing
light on their heights and hollows, scarves
of mist and forest floating

song-scrapes on the flippant
little winds off the lakes

our way, elsewhere.

VARIETY

Evolution's baroque
period. Perpetual

elaboration our niche. And view-
point; Theresa tells of the male spider
with hook to hold a female's head

in place, mating. He's done for
but after he's done. As when I want her
to kiss me. And then I want her

to buy the cheap panties
of leopard-skin

print. For a change. One's
brief flourish. Jewish artisans
building Alhambra worked their star
into the Moorish motif. Far past

and forward stranger
to see the geese browsing—
shrugging back the grubs.
The thrust of it not

living but making

a complex compost.

US IN EVERYTHING

What to make of light
is issue

against the nay-
sayers, turners-away
but for them at length

who swim too in its puzzlement

raising their glasses
into its assurances, modest vocabulary

of qualities in and around and upon
definitives of objects and ethers, clarities

of isolation

but of itself
what is it, despite our successes

aslant here in the tulips, there
in the white flash blindness

commencing and concluding the opened
atom's invitation? Some simple telling

image drowns
in any human eye for it, a smile's
infusion, eddies of pollen
on the windshield

signals the singular singing again
of the invisible making us see and seen.

SURPRISED

Apex, high anchor
of an April sky mishandled
so to splash the night, sans moonlight

upon us freely to the lees —
we'll never see, listing

in frog pause, steep Chablis
of Narcissus sleeping nearly

how our wonder is undone, unravels
aimlessly
 how we've lost

you, locating Leo.

Or one said, "Ride
the dipper. It's nothing,"

and then above the racket
of the ratchets clacking
under our ascending car, peak

of that propelling climb
"You're gonna die."
 But didn't.

But done before we knew it. But hard
on the heels of mesh and meld
weld personal
a cooling song

of all things wants après

delirium
her rudimentary handle on
the far light, its libation.

TILL AGING

All our systems huge and old
even those determinedly
chaotic

crowd us
begging the questions
that are of us alone

and must be posed therefore
eternally in loneliness, constriction:

if created how
and why

and if not how
and why the burgeoning

flourishes, the DNA fanfare?
“that sentient beings could

be constitutionally numb
to the texture of reality?”

So confined the world grinds
forty, cog-captured, wobbling
into metaphysics. Venus

brightest these nights
in this half-century

wasn't missed, it's only
that the information followed
with some discretion upon

the event. Advent
of the cloudy evenings

brings her
I bring her
she comes in time

to mind.
So less on the horns

and more in remembrance
one's cognizant

QUIBBLE

Of the deep kissing stuff
moonish languor, foolishness
of locked-in sighs
O that we might try it sliding

open in luxurious surprise, operatic
from complacency, practical generosity
entirely upon memory and promise.

For such I would handle her however
she demanded or hardly imagined
she wanted, on one wet

fingertip, in slippery

handfuls, roughly
by the nipples

or do salad
and the dishes daily, gaily
pay off the family van, live with

the quirk of the key:
in pretty easy, happily
wriggling, still to be

novice to the fine
tolerances, secure

discrepancies
of moment, person.