

## Patrick Friesen / FIVE POEMS

at the sill

august's heat  
an 11 o'clock church bell  
sirens and light  
through the window  
across 2 mugs  
jammed with pens and brushes  
an ancient fan's racket  
a lamp and shards of stone

niko's still asleep  
sprawled on the floor  
the length of him and muscle  
entangled with pillow and blanket  
he doesn't know his power  
dreaming of sky and home  
here in new york city

I'm wondering  
about how simple matters get  
how there's nothing to find  
nothing to look for  
I'm wondering about earth's things  
how I love to touch them  
and let them go

this city is at your ears and eyes  
like a commercial or a junkie  
clawing at the window  
always a foot in the door  
this city hyperventilates all day and night  
so eager for its fix  
its pulse whispering like brushes on a snare

and I'm the silly one  
savoring this moment  
at the skyline window  
thinking of tenderness  
at the sill

and always there are these objects  
the dusty sill itself  
a weight of granite for the paper  
there are things to touch or taste  
and remind me of other things  
a star falling in october  
my son's tattooed feather

a small tenderness

and there  
beneath ghetto talk  
and cool movie talk  
and street talk  
beneath motherfucker  
and pussy and fuck you  
beneath whitey and nigger  
and man and woman  
at each other's throats  
beneath junkies and cokeheads  
and killers in their suits  
blood spattered  
across the kitchen  
and dancefloor  
the audience splitting a gut  
there  
hidden away  
the last shock  
a final insult  
beneath greed  
and car wrecks  
and talk shows  
beneath it all  
beneath the floorboards  
a small tenderness

the soul  
sunken  
into the dig  
the soul  
gone archaeological  
pinning itself  
into the grave  
the bones  
of a bird  
barbarian of some middle way  
going nowhere  
underfoot  
a man a woman primitives  
with petroforms on the brain  
the sadness of memory  
and old ways  
remembering the long stride  
hands  
the path

nomad gone to ground  
without forests and grass  
without mountains to cross  
nomad without a way  
gone to zero  
in the city  
nomad with his senses about him  
a vacant mirror  
and a desire to love

a dog at the door

these faulty days  
like snorri  
afraid of open doors  
imagining one's self  
in empty rooms  
an actor  
playing himself

no  
that's too easy

a dog at the door  
invisible  
you can hear him  
standing still  
you can smell fear  
an eternity of waiting  
sparks shooting  
through his skeleton

the temerity  
of a horse  
shying  
with white rimming  
its large brown eyes  
the world  
spinning

like an autistic child  
unable to touch  
watching black holes  
eat up the sky

snorri drills his snout  
beneath your idle hand  
shovelling it up  
to stroke his head  
how can you not love  
what needs you so much?

darkened doors  
you already half-live there  
your hands  
reaching  
remembering the terrain  
of the wall  
near the light switch

the dog  
will go anywhere  
with you

our hands

so  
here we are  
alone  
all lovers gone  
forgiving and forgiven

here we are  
with the storm  
in our hands  
and our hands  
on the table

it's quiet  
in this room  
two ladder-back chairs  
dust  
and a hatrack

it's quiet  
with shadows  
in the door  
and lilacs  
at the window

my hands reach  
for yours  
no more deals  
nothing happens  
inside this room

hands lose  
their lines  
their work  
and play  
perished

let me roll you

what's it like  
to taste you  
mouthed and tongued  
to smell  
your skin  
and trace  
your terrain  
with my hands?

what's it like  
at 48  
lolling  
in the doorway  
forgetful  
of the rooms  
I've been in  
and awake

what it's like  
ready for you  
at last  
a dangerous life  
of bare moments  
and few words  
let me roll you  
in my arms