

Audrey Thomas / BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NORTH END, SPANISH HILLS

We asked for Valhalla
but ended up
among the trees, Madrona

(arbutus by any other
chance) naming as in the dream:

I am cat, mouse, rat, toad
(& snake in some other self)

& audrey says, the toad-prince,
who is ugly
& must be loved for himself,
warts & all that dress of slime,
whom the lady accepts in threes—

a place at her table, next first,
to eat from her bowl, third
to share her bed, but last
her kiss

this makes him into the prince
who is unendingly handsome & needs
no more mirrors
& they all live happily
ever after:

but in her laughter
is an unhappy sound madrona
There's too much pain here
to bear dreamily
though we do. She herself becomes
the toad who devours Me.
Unhappily.

It's silly to say
I pray my kiss becomes
her other self
who is beautiful
beyond her words
& needs no such worship.

We wake into the storm of this day,
the wind in the waters
stirring
madrona
the sacred tree
that sheds its skin
unendingly

for Audrey,

love
P.
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