Janet Cotgrave / TWO POEMS PEPPERS & SAND

Being unable to walk through those four walls I stand at the edge. your voice comes over the wall, enters me.

Inside you cultivate vegetables and other plants once, while standing at the edge I saw suddenly, an orange tree.

Often you open the door, throw out mice, peppers and some of your prize plants (though never any oranges

Outside, I waited. You appeared briefly, in your hand were two seeds, I caught only a glimpse but you were pleased. 'Good, I'd . . .' (like to taste them

When you'd gone I stepped on them, they turned to phosphorus in my footprints

in the sand, then too far away to touch. On the outside of the wall a photograph, a line of camels. In the centre a man walks (I know it's you

I follow him out of the picture. I see only sand, this man, you are, the planter of phosphorus.

You see landmarks. I follow your voice so closely I begin to see who you are.

> Behind the wall let me plant a thing small and

and green

You stop to help a camel beget two tender young ones a difficult birth, 'I'd . . .' (like to stroke them.

But you've disappeared.

I pick up a handful of sand to see if you've left any seeds or bits of blue behind, but it blows into my eyes obscuring my vision (I don't even see where I stand) alone I gather

peppers & sand

March 1976

Words, going

Streams, your worn body, articulate to oceans. And the danger of wanting a single source words, clear as fish, rise from.

Rise,

dart from the hand, shine in sun before they fall.

Or love your many, unfolding as the world goes. Not to protect you: they tear wanting one, you hold and go. Not to mend.

But to wash seaweed and salt from your arms.

Slip from caresses, ride waves: fish at your fingertips.

whole and gone in waves. I search for you in words.

your

whole mouth, your cock, these are clear, one, wanting you simply but hearing more.

I learn

articulation, turn to see my faces rise with fish.

And swim clearly or.

As the stream goes As the world goes

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