

John Pass / THREE POEMS

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

I know what I know.
It strikes me as I lie

on the floor to read, one arm
across my forehead, a rectangle
of windows slapped blue, sky-full.

Window, edge to edge entirely
blue, and soft orange light
on the sills and frames
surrounding, of sun.

I do nothing.
I go on reading.
I get what I need
and remember:

I went down close by the tree
where the sun was. The cat
was too. In the branches

it was warm. The cat came over
near my face. A metal-blue
Stellar's jay shuffled
under another tree
in deep dry leaves.

I went some yards, bent down
a branch to get a yellow apple
frozen-through, thawing.
As I did so

another fell. I took two.
I tapped on the window. "Look,"
I said to you, "where the cat is."

Know what I know.

FITFULLY

The leaves blow down and then
the air is still. My only friends

tell me a poem shouldn't be so
perfect. Pieces of the world
are shaken loose in their poems.
They are left hanging.

We argue.

They say the Chinese masters
had nothing else and are perhaps
to be forgiven their perfections.
I sleep fitfully

all night because I love them
and the leaves blow down
and the air is still

shaking.

WORN SURFACES / OLD INJURIES

An overstuffed chair
where heads and hands
at rest have worried
off the pile and cats
have shredded the fabric.

A rotting gutterless edge
of roof.

A grey expanse of water.

Frayed branches of
the leafless weeping
willow.

Split-
ends of hair.

All the weatherings
of attention, of too
much or too little care.

(My dog leapt
unaccountably
out a fifteen-
foot high window.

X-rays displayed
how the leg was broken
under the swelling.)

Under the rain,
the soggy lawn,
the pools on flat
roofs, the dark gleam
of the roads at night,
the soft familiar sag
of the bed

(preoccupied, thorough,
as in my picking up
of the scraps of shingle
windows scatter across the yard)

I favour
a slow-healing
fracture: nerveless
deadened sense

of a companionship
of things. I carry

it awkwardly.
From time to time
it catches on the ground.