

Diana Hartog / THREE POEMS

LOVE POEM

You come to me as waters flood,
without knock, beyond keys,
too late to save
what seems important at the time.

Scattered poems, nightgowns,
open, underlined books — all
ravished by your mere presence;
the lick of rug beneath my feet,
even my blue china cups
neat on their hooks — betrayed.

My knees notice first
and then my thighs go;
Dürer's wing, luminous in its frame,
blurs. Nothing matters.

Your lips fade the flowers on the wall:
one by one fall the numbed roses.

ON THE OCCASION OF A DEATH BY SUICIDE

I

A delicate subject, followed in the journals:
some propose the mind hovers above the brain.
Others, materialists, have it kit & kaboodle.

Some, past theory, merely aim up
through the mouth.
Fact/pain — we all know the general direction.

A neighbor, one who assumes odd jobs, cleaned up the mess.
I imagine him standing on a chair, stretched,
picking the shards of skull from the ceiling.

I can follow him this far: the evidence
each piece by itself. Right at the last minute
my thoughts stray.

II

COWBOY

The bullet starts again, fires
whip whip whip
the horse billowing under him, her mane
lifting like kelp
his spine buckling
his spine buckling
his knee his knee his knee
the shute warping out
the mare and him
buckling into the dark

III

There should be at least three poems
for this man.
Already I see the pattern: a breath tightly drawn,
then a pretense at letting go,
both poems
watched with the anxiety of one who distrusts air.
It's becoming clear that this is me, breathing,
using this death.

IV

The house is empty. Lights on
and a man unable to hear the lake.
He has scattered himself — the walls,
every room has been reached, as when the heart, twisted,
explodes in its cavity.

Hours of only moths.
Hours of pure companionship — the walls almost gentle
the way they continue.

UNTITLED SCULPTURE

You handle rain beautifully.
Your shape reminds me of flesh, an organ
pressured into odd angles,

the poem too filling the odd shape of the moment,
its perfection just that — that it is complete
and enters every fissure and hole without hesitation,
with the curiosity of water.

A heart then — huge and black —
still ugly with mystery
and that bizarre swelling that happens
when a familiar word is repeated over and over: Heart

flooding into the fingers of my father's hand
as if blowing a balloon
and I hold it like a real hand
as if it would last forever.