

The Possibility Witch

This convexed love a rearview mirror
fixed on negative space

stars turned inside out
subjects closer than they are

fish heads on the half shell
blind luck in the southcoast sun

roller coaster skeleton
carnival of old thrills

funhouse a vacant lot
where the midway was

mission viejo doves and swallows
soft lens on the pupil's black hole

no services rest stop
last stop before the border

quantum entanglement
right around the next bend

*

After sunrise mantra on Second Mesa
and finding Joe, my faithful Russian Blue
fellow traveler at his own ritual
(four baby cottontails laid out
in parallel pointing from him to the sun),
drove south on 87 until I saw
a dirt road heading off into a cornfield.
Leaving Joe in the pickup, I followed the road
to where an old Indian woman stood waiting.

You want corn she said in a matter of fact voice,
a statement as much as question. I nodded yes.
She went behind the cabin and came back
with three ears — red, white, yellow.
I gestured with open palms and puzzled look.
She handed me the corn, went behind the cabin
and this time came back with the blue one.
I accepted it with a thank you and bow,
walked back to the pickup and headed south.

*

Eyes blue gray green as ocean waves
catching the sun, hands quiet as silhouettes,
nazgûl-thin wings above the palms in dawn pastels
teasing out what was to be said without words

*

Yet Further
north of language
schools and Bolinas

a busload of heads
profiles
in tinted windows

odd hours
cuckoo clock
times of departure

gift of gab
behind the wheel
navigating

no hopalong
or butch but blarney
in a cowboy hat

picturesque
place names
picaresque lives

washed up
between between
and nowhere

pulled over
for of all things
going too slow

in the beginning
desire not instinct
but drive she said

*

Next stop
Here Now
On or Off

*

Beef-to-heel to Connemara curls
cloverleafs all over the map

whistling swans and Uileann pipes
translucent air wavering

where all roads lead to *amor inanis*
calling on those in the land of the dead

*

Mountaintop islands in a sea of cloud

vermillion memories of the sun
your voice the breath I breathe

*

Offwhite stucco ceiling writhing
Celtic puzzles and Chinese knots
philodendra fractaling
across a bonewhite wall

You someone else entirely
yet someone I'd known
as in the mirror I wasn't.
Bach made it all reasonable

*

As things begin to define themselves
out of the animal darkness you
as usual disappear leaving only
the sense of you here and the phoebe
outside rehearsing his plaintive refrain

*

You came in wearing a mask
the color of invisible

Where your eyes should have been
all I saw was the open door behind you

When your voice without a mouth
said *Am I too late?*

I answered *Are you out of your mind?*
then asked myself the same question

*

Past tense past perfect to be exact you
all but vanished at the gamebird refuge
in a yellow-headed icterid murmuration
which surrounded you with a tumult of wings

*

High on a windmill crow's nest
surrounded by possibilities
an angle iron skeleton
blades overhead mincing the moonlight
wellpipe at the center between us
the air cooled down by propriety

*

No, no, I take it all back,
that couldn't have been you with the bronze sickle
prowling the Navarro redwoods

or light as a feather in the Berkeley Hills

Tenderloin Mission Dolores
Land's End group grope

eyes aflame when that Big Sur
restaurant refused to serve
you and your ragtag family

or skirting miles of sheer death-wish
at the edge of the old haul road
high above the lost coast

smooth as a sylph between crossbow
William Tells on electric wine
and feckless boys with beercans on their heads

or gamboling with lambs on the Scotia headlands
sapphire eyes too ancient to bear
looking into for fear of drowning

curls redhot as fiddle strings
holding your own with old timers
your chosen dead drunk at your feet

or by the hearth with cat and harp
plucked wires conjuring up
airs forlorn and melancholy

grocerycart bag lady
ensorcelling Kwikstop gas pumps
with blue streak logorrhea

or dancing solo in a beachtown bar
pretending to see only one eye
pinned on your every move

hand in hand walking the dunes
dark night winter squall
tracks dissolving in wet sand

or under the space needle umbrella
more than enough show and tell
masochism to go around

*

And north of all that a little café,
unsmiling eyes on mine you said
I'm burning a hole in the seat of this chair

July, sky severe clear, the pulsing
a shingle beneath the old-growth,
cobble and wave call and response,

pterodactylan pelicans
single file skimming the surface

pebbles babbling in rocky beds

*

O god Omigod

you cried again and again and again
our first time together again

*

The best ever you said was on his Harley,
head down behind the windshield, the hog's
signature *suck-squeeze-bang-and-blow*
between your thighs, the two of you
leaning into hairpin curves coming
down the long grade from the high country

*

In your more sentimental moods
you liked to visit that old graveyard
too high on the bluff to hear
waves slapping the rocks below,
gravestones too weathered to read and one
with a hole through the granite and windowglass
on either side so you can see her heart
once loved and loving now shriveled and black

*

Something like ectoplasm
another bodily fluid
superfine subtle
next to nothing at all
left in me a ghost
of everything I am

*

While you play Debussy for me
on your 88-key Roland I see
a closed garden in temperate rain
a nymph in sensuous reverie

Bells from a cathedral campanile
buried fathoms deep by the drift
continents half-muffled
toll the afternoon office

Newborn from his labyrinth a faun,
hides in the topiary, eyes
like rain washed leaves catching
the last slanting rays of the sun

What creature is this, he wonders, that fills
the gathering darkness of the green world
with moonlight lustrous as ivory
in cultivated garden beds

And then, soft diminuendo
in lieu of resolution still
whispering between my ears,
to open my eyes you tell me

the Roland, for all its digital magic,
can't transmit as well as a grand
or sensitive lover the subtle touch,
the delicacy, of fingers on the keys

*

It won't be long now said the gray lady,
dustmop in one hand
the other under the bedclothes
her feet, poor thing, already cold
and that's where it begins

*

Contact lens in too long:
eyeballs bloodshot
white matter in the tear ducts
— *as long as it's not green pus* said the eye-doc
but give it a rest, don't set your beams
too high, quit trying to tell what you see
with only one eye on the road
from what you're looking at or for

*

I-10 Shamrock Texas
bitter cold blizzard night
hiking back east to try to make peace
between my mother and grandmother
while there was still time

A white El Dorado pulled up
under the truckstop arc lamps.
When I opened the door you motioned me
to put my pack in the back seat
and sit up front in the heater's warmth

In the blue glow of the dash and headlights
reflected back in off the snow,
the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen:
high cheekbones, long hair, turquoise,
your very presence a radiance.

Hours and few words later
under a truckstop arc lamp
outside OK City
your smile said fare well
your lights disappeared in the snow

*

Midnight the middle of nowhere

high desert backcountry blacktop
still wet from late afternoon showers,
down the road ahead a myriad
of red lights dancing in the darkness
(*For sure nothing human* you said)
that when we stopped turned out to be
thousands of newborn spiders clinging
to wisps of gossamer shroud lines
suspended from the darkness above,
their spectral red lunatic eyes
refracted by our headlights,
drifting west in the humid air

*

Betwixt the two say Quakers
is where love is

Between *yin* and *yang* is *ch'i*
says the *I Ching*

*

And there were deer in the old orchard
does and fawns and they came to you

and you gave them windfall apples,
stroked their foreheads with your fingertips

and they nuzzled your palm then we
walked back to the car without a word

*

Black silver tarnish luster
precious as polished splendor

Milk-blue moon so thin
the sky behind it bled through

*

Oedipus you may have noticed
has precious little to do with this
despite your proclivities
my sibling fantasies

the Sphinx even less, though
riddle-me-this love poems
with a vengeance do pose questions that forever
plague family romance

*

Speaking of love
tongue in cheek
a permanent wink

Walked away

from another one
said the brakeman