

Five Poems

Paul S. Piper

Her Scarf

How thin the needle?
How hard the thimble?

When they meet does it matter?
Betwixt and between

the wind tugs her scarf. Blue
arcs from her.

Y Mas

for Jim Harrison

There is more beauty in the human
sky than these clouds thick

with rain can write. There is more
love in this bear of a dog

slobbering my old man's face than
the waves can fathom as they

froth the shore. We all live
in our own stupidly blinking

minds and hearts under a common sky. Meager
we praise luminescence, mourn the fact
that the largesse of our passion only increases
territory. In the darkness between stars
music fills our ears equally to the brim, spills
over as the birds of morning drink.

Yesterday Morning

In this poem is a clock. A simple
clock set in a brick tower, black
hands drifting over the white surface.
We see the clock through the cold white
clouds of breath that accompany our words.
Sitting on a bench, talking, the
moon still gripping the horizon, not wanting
to leave. Everything stalls.
The grackles seem frozen in air, their calls
like beautiful flutes. And then the black hands again

scrape
the clock's surface, and I'm sure I can hear it —

the gritty music of time passing. The moon
loses her grip and disappears,

and I have stopped listening
to your words, listening

instead to the fragile breath that births
them.

Sculpture

Salmon of copper
tube; koi, bright orange

against the umber cobble,
light dapples the gravel paths

and boardwalk, and the musicians:
iron, one holds a fat guitar, another

a flute, the third an accordion. They each
wear elegant hats. In the valley

below brakes scree. The valley below is stopping
to listen — the music

invades the air. Again it seems
like everything is slipping away.

This is the song the musicians play, the
song where the valley stops

and listens, the song where
everything is slipping away.

Lament

There is nothing sad in this opening
only the voices I can't hear

behind the ones I do.
A bird falls into the body

like a stone that falls through water
finding no surface to fracture no

surface to rest on.
There is a need to rest

no wanderer that does not resist
the house of bones no

bones that do not ache

with the insubstantiality of words.

This house is for those travelers
who migrate both ways

and stop in the same place thinking
it is the center of their journey.