



sample poems from

Translations From The Human Language

Thirst

This year I've felt the push of antlers
thrusting out of my head.
I've leaned my head many times toward the grass, stretching
my neck to drink. This year
I've awoken from the catacombs of sleep,
my cheeks wet with spring water,
my heart beating like a river
sprung from rock.

Woman With Book

1

In a yellow frame hangs the face of a man,
a profile with sensitive lips
she might kiss.
She is posing in long, sensual curves.
One arm bends like a palm tree
her head leans against.
Ah! She is reading.
But see how the book has fallen
open into her lap.
He is thinking about her round breasts,
the curve of her belly.
He places his hand along her folds
and opens her.
She tilts back her head,
lowers her eyelids.
Her mouth a red berry.
Her nipples two red berries.
The man in the yellow frame
is blank and abstract.
She is bound up in his obsession with curves.
The hand in her lap, his
heavy dark lines

2

She is posing with sensitive lips
a profile

a yellow frame
He is thinking about bending

like a palm tree
He is thinking

about the dark lines of a man
He places his mouth

along her folds
and opens

two red berries
She is posing

blank and abstract
hands

in her lap
her folds

his sensitive lips
the heavy frame

she is bound up in
the sensual curves of a man

see how the book
hangs open

the thought
she might



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sometimes in the open you look up

to see a whorl of clouds, dragging and furling
your whole invented history. You look up
from where you're standing, say
among the stolid mountains,

and in that moment your life

becomes the margin
of what matters, and solid earth

you love dizzies away from you

like the wet shoreline sucked back
by that other eternity,

the sea. At times the spinning
earth shrugs you off balance,
gravity loosens its fist, hoists you into the sky,
and you might spend your life trying to recover

this nearness to flight.

Light, Gravity, No Nouns

in no hungry walking upright
empty wingless ascends alongside
a right round round right round falls brightly spherical
arranged, arranges hollow, hollow climbs tall

lanky pushing, fingering fall
a yelling angry and her talking and lingering
at this eating, a swallowing down dark
down breaking, broken splinters into listen

World In Need Of Braiding

This time of year our hands reach for the ends of
things, twist patterns out of reflected light, out of
water, loaves of bread. We lie down on the grass
beside those we have disappointed, dry, unfor-
given. We are supposed to be eating, preparing to
sleep, filling the storerooms with enough color,
dividing the universe into light and dark. But the
dry grass, the purple thistles, the burrs in our
socks want our attention. They are old. They are
dying. They need us to listen to their stories, the
same as last year.

"Not much breath left," say the grasses, and the
brittle gates of the hill swing open. We love this
season of loose connections, excess of prepositions,
the long shadows of the corn. And now the car-
riage of darkness rides into view, bright yellow
wheels and spokes like unfriendly laughter. Now
the long carriage of night gathering speed.

Take us slowly down the wind-sea, this plenitude
of death. Slowly, slowly run the last of the day-
light, riding away the sun. We come wobbling,
void of course, shaking in our inadequate clothes.
We need time to lie down in the evening shadows
we love, to stretch our heart beyond its cage of
silence, to pull what grows, richly and abundantly,
towards us.