

FOUR POEMS

by

Peter Grandbois

[And so I wake]

“I find the greatest serenity in hallucination.”—Clarice Lispector (1920-1977)

The dark threshold beckons. The drunken night demands I wash out my eyes. The hour complicit in erasing the wall between what I know and what I refuse to know. The only thing left is to search for an exit, to travel into a language I don't understand. And so I wake to find my being depends on standing. I rise out of the dream's slow dissolve, losing my feet a little with each step, traveling further into all my gods dying like cockroaches in the forgotten corners, wondering who, then, is the pilot of this infested body.

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Everything has a price

“My whole life has been spent walking by the side of a bottomless chasm, jumping from stone to stone.”—Edvard Munch (1863-1944)

Leaping Toward lost Toward I refuse This
Morning Where wakened birds Fall Like a crush
Of stars And the door Seems So Far
What I would not Give To sleep The night sky
Pooling Around This Seamless present That cocoons
My larval Body From which flowers Grow
Like shedding Skins Within which Lies
Dormant In a deep Green forest The sound
Of one Hidden Scream.

The gathering

"Do I perform sometimes in a manic style? Yes. Am I manic all the time? No. Do I get sad? Oh yeah. Does it hit me hard? Oh yeah."—Robin Williams (1951-2014)

After the gathering
of ghosts

swells the itinerant
dusk,

and the turkey vultures
sitting in trees

have claimed another day,
and the cries of crows

cling to your clothes
as the last light

leans in low,
conjuring

the darkness that kisses
your eyes,

the wound awakens,
and you are left

to inherit the trembling
slowness of the earth,

to once again feel
your length

of breath about you
circling, circling,

like a shadow
over the winter grass.

For whom you are suffering

“I am mentally ill. I can say that. I am not ashamed of that. I survived that, I’m still surviving it, but bring it on. Better me than you.”—Carrie Fisher (1956-2016)

As if we could own
this madness, dissolve
it into liquid,
a tincture to take
twice a day, or pop
in pill form, as if
we needed something
to remind us one
fever dream is not
enough, the muddy field
empty as a scream
without sound, a silence
without ticking, a
body without—to
miss it is to grow
afraid, to pretend
to know the terrible
charity of words.
Little left to do
but watch and wait
in the upstairs room,
eyeing the mirror
above the dresser
where you are caged,
claiming everything
as your own.