



THE EAST WIND 1918

CHARLES BURCHFIELD

COASTAL LOGGING TOWN

"Hereabouts the signs are good" — Thomas Kinsella

Here, near the beginning of the horizon, nothing
is clear. The wind bodes cruel; creatures
hide till death turns up their lesions,
and strewn in rows along the beach they sing

that great music Plato heard westering
in the heavens. A dory takes the rock end of nature.
A few survive. Someone loses a conversation
with a saw and takes his beer by hook, telling
frantic tales by night.

And still men hunt
deer on the wood side of the highway, fish
for salmon in the sea. What shall they give up for Lent,
they who live hard on this edge? What excess
if laid aside might ease their predicament?
They live lean, between despair and wish.

STANLEY RADHUBER

THE HEALING ART

You are hereby summoned
I would fashion all your summons and threats and pompous legal
puffery
into an endless black veil
that I would wrap around and around and around
your amazed and open mouth
until your noisome utterings
could no longer pollute our world

You are hereby ordered to appear
I would beam all the lawyers and petition-servers and testifiers and
miscellaneous jackals
that you have purchased with your gold
to some distant galaxy where money does not rule

I urge you to seek legal counsel
Your complaints about freedom of speech
and empty cries of "libel, libel"
I would transform into an avenging scream
that would rip out your vocal cords
and silence you
as you have tried to silence others.

Demand is hereby made for payment
What you sow you shall reap
the currency of your reward
will not be available from banks or courts
it will not be negotiable

It is ordered and adjudged that plaintiff have judgement against
defendants

Like the judo masters, using your strength as our weapon
your venom will turn against its maker
steal into all you bodily orifices
and as the fever of your anger rises
the poison speeds faster and faster to its destination
until
you will be
no more
our rage and yours
at last destroyed
the power of the truth
finally
triumphant

LEIGH DOLIN

BURNING STARS

Stick by stick, brickface
and foundation,
I've built this house, tacking down its hair.
And some nights, like this night, across the sky
a shooting star burns out
as we sit and watch it and want to know things.
Nothing conspiratorial tends toward us
except the other stars
over Liquid Carbonic
the idle star, the strange star, the lowly star
all stick close
so far from us wind draws off their sticky
galactic scent, the hyacinth, the pitch.

Tonight out on the lawn
a carnival dragon filled with friends
shuffles its sequined spine of stars
and half-moons past storefronts
and alleys, each of us breathing the mothball
fire of its fabric and shouting louder
than the next, buffeting indignities
that can't change, that we are,
as meaningless chatter about work
allows the only real work
of memory, forgetting, to swell like a rain squall
any evil personal enough to touch our lives
gathering again on the lawn
to say goodbye, the evening's over
when it's just begun, headlights curving
through pepper tree and rhododendron.

Because I don't go away
I go upstairs
and place my hands like pink starfish on the window
and lower my head as if a slew of stars
were released in holding back
when the hungry star staggers in, intimate
as it expands my insides
where I don't live.
Will I be frightened enough to welcome it,
saying this pane of glass
is yours, you throb of light,
empty as the hullabaloo of stars is empty
even as I stand in it,
letting each of the sky's prima donnas
touch me with its invisible camera.
As cruel and as generous
as the dust it burns with
let us drift separately.
I raise my voice, a call deserted of voice,
I am desperate.

RICHARD LYONS



HELENA SCHJERFBECK 1938

DID YOU BLEED?

I tell him about the dream I had last night.
I tell him
I don't understand. I was in the streets and
running away from police and crowds, wounded
by rubies.
I had been shot in some fray,
a spray of rubies studded my legs, my hands,
even my face. Imbedded with red, I
struggled away.

Home at last, I pried one out of my leg
with a penknife.
The gem shone rose
in the lamplight.

He asks what happened when I dug out the stones,
"Did you bleed?"
I think for a moment, answer, "No. They just
left scars."

GERRY FOOTE