

“Not in Any Ha Ha Way”

I went to the grocery store
and pressed my ear against the butter
and it cried out and I pressed my ear
against the paper towels and they cried out
but of what I cannot tell. All was
as one jellied equation that ended
with the symbol for oblivion although
it could have been a mistake,
something half-erased. Obviously,
there was no question about going down
the catfood lightbulb hygiene aisle.
We had been warned maybe a thousand times
to enjoy ourselves but outside, the sky
had turned fustian and doggy, there was
rain then sunshine making the executives
with umbrellas go from looking like geniuses
to prim morons. Oh how I wanted my lips
pressed against your parachute jacket but
you were wearing your cloak of not-being-there.
Is all that a culture can hope to produce
interesting ruins for the absent gods
to sweep their metal detectors through?
Surely, I am not the one to ask.
There is a sidereal embezzlement to my days
made indescribable with eclipses, car payments,
wounded sofas, parts of the rose bush
fifteen feet long, approximately the length
of childhood. You are not the first
to ask me to describe this darkness,
it is the job I've never wanted but
am always overqualified for, being
too zealous and confused just as scientists,
after introducing electrodes into the monkeys'
diencephalons, still don't know if life
is suffering therefore beautiful or
life is beautiful therefore we must suffer.