

BARBARA CLAIRE FREEMAN

In the Garden of Still Life

Before to-
night's moon

thin rind, no

red marker
of sand

broken vessel

or century, at
last the

page

slithers, stripped

No, I *must*
first be other

torn again
down

*

An already

rigorous
depletion

that won't

stay
long enough

Voices
in wind

from the
opposite of

hope, you

said *open*
door after
door

*

Turned from the black hills when the rains began—

*

To disguise

illegible angles
at odds

with stars

If lies
could bind

like chains of
snow
or glass

*

A death

that once was
slow to

come now
come sooner

*

Fuck every fucking one of you—I wish I was a fucking tree—

*

Flayed, forgot

to live
in the past

tense *rain*
drummed

drops bit

lacking
decorum
limited by

grammatical ruins

*

Sally forth

memorialize
a counterfeit

zero bound
to zero

*

And you show them how to get here and you tell them I'll be waiting—

*

Never
the same
gate twice

your voice
my veins

wound
for word

Every prop-
osition

fast

draw, quick
and dead

*

Fossils
of obsolete

verbs, inflexions
numerals

requiem

Unreliable
connections

thru which
the musics

might fade

*

But what a blessing finally to reach a point where I don't have to know —

*

*For long night
comes and
a day*

*when no day
returns*

the none's bed
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If
if I could
drown

in the *diving*
words

*no more
than tone*

*

God knows
I'm not
Penelope

falling
*across your
doorstep*

in the wind

a frozen
garden, cold
as the

spectacle

of lyric
time

*

At any rate I shall not have my epitaph in a high road —

*

A hard
year *putting*
up with

copper's
silences

in byra
breastcofan
bindath faeste

the origin's un-
willing legacy
not mine, not

anymore

*

On the wall
above

where the
fire was

white satin
almost solstice

eve, quiet as
a sonnet

Grieve, to
minimize

the effects of
grief

*

I must believe it is a benign conversation the earth is having with me—

*

Can't, no
matter

the shadows
cast (a
horse

cast if
it falls
then can't

stand) shapeless
the shapeless line

Lay down
tracks, take

me again, *in-*
carnations
of mud

not Isis either

*

To the limit's
precipice

held back
against

a final
turn

at odds
with shots of
ice, wind-

driven snow
Thus began

a search for

the father

lode, the vein
of silver

drive a
stake, claim
a throat

*

If I understand you correctly you've just said nothing—

*

No one's fault
four quakes
in four

nights, moon
tangled in
eucalyptus

Even the
earth holds

Jagged

lines, under
pressures

that do
not coincide

fracture

*

Marks turn
syllables in

two, beating
out the bed

rock of speech

understand
i-o-u

nothing from

the first strike
the other side

upstream, older
than stone

unburied
in me

*

Make it look like an accident—

*

Word-noose
ring a neck
stricter

than time
Choke-stung
strummed, sung

and you

said *no*
thing all
the day

*

Log out, gold
over the water

*

And while I was down at the creek I heard voices and I went to where they were singing—

Notes to “In the Garden of Still Life”

“must first be”—C.D. Wright, “Re: Happiness, in pursuit thereof”

“An already rigorous depletion”—Robert Majzels, “Books from the Burning Building”

“open door after door”—Cole Swensen, “from *The Glass Age*”

“that once was slow to” —Horace, “Virgil’s Journey to Greece,” from *The Odes of Horace*, Trans. David Ferry

“flayed,” “to live”—Marjorie Welish, “Skin”

“the rain drummed drops hit limited by grammatical”—Rosmarie Waldrop, “Inserting the Mirror”

“zero ... to zero”—Keith Waldrop, “Three or Four Poems”

“through which the musics might”—Ann Lauterbach, “In the Museum of the Word (Henri Matisse)”

“For long night ... returns”—Ezra Pound, “Homage to Sextus Propertius”

“diving words”—Paul Celan, “Tubingen, Jannen”

“no more than a tone”—Devin Johnston, “Ghost”

“across your doorstep in the wind...frozen garden”—Horace, “To Lycia,”

“A hard ... copper’s”—Gisele Celan-Lestranger, letter to Paul Celan

“*in...faeste*”—“The Wanderer,” from *The ABC of Reading*, Ezra Pound

“where the fire was”—Ann Lauterbach, “Instruction”

“incarnations of mud”—Paul Celan, letter to Rene Char

“and you...the day”—John Donne, “The Ecstasy”

With the exception of the sentence “At any rate I shall not have my epitaph in a high road” (Ezra Pound, “Homage to Sextus Propertius”), all prose passages are quoted or paraphrased from the TV series *Deadwood*, seasons 1 and 2.