

MEREDITH WATTISON

The Loose Wild Grace Of It

*'Fortunately, there still exist persons for whom living means something
more complex than keeping out of the rain'*

e.e. cummings

'... as if one must step off into space somewhere.'

D. H. Lawrence

For Otis

1.

It came back to me, a false memory of falling out of a coral tree.
Like any primate, I had glimpsed what it is to fall, and not quite fall;
I remembered that I fell; but I did not definitively fall. I was pendant,
bare-footed, salty, sanded, languorous in bikini pants, green polo-neck;
the cobalt sky, vermilion. My friend, a boy she knew and I, at such height,
with such gravity, mere hands, toes, for tether;
the eternal polyphonic isosceles in flux and flower.

(cont)

2.

Earlier, a true memory, Mrs Cox's weeping willow's bacchanal,
full of extant southerly, the loose wild grace of it;
nebulous, a vestigial, chaotic maypole.

Heightened, wild, we clung to it and swung
like breathless, ecstatic astronauts.
Stood in the calm void within
to hide our trespass, something self-obliterating, transformative;
sand and tabula rasa.

3.

Earlier still, in 1861, like a limestone nephogram,
as though crushed under fluxion, definition,
the exquisite pages of the finest mineralised sediment,
archaeopteryx lithographica like rotogravure.
This 'winged creature' with rudimentary true feathers,
for some, was proof of seraphim. I pick these
end-of-season oranges like frozen child's-fist-sized planets,
so sharp, intense, infinitesimal sweat pricks my upper lip.
Their ragged bee-crowding flowers returning, polished agatized
coral as florescent. My grandchild flutters in first trimester. My son a
father.

4.

Swimming at night, she has breasted bioluminescence. Mapplethorpe's
orchid
cresting. The day before lockdown, my daughter, in androgynous
Japanese linen,
modelled for a Gothic jeweller. One shot, her guitarist's wild graceful
hand,
wearing two heavy silver rings, a tempus fugit intaglio, a finis, loosely
holds a sword. She says they wanted her 'Joan of Arc' vibe. Another,
shut-eyed translucence, each fine-grained freckle lit, saturate, sanguine.
She and her bandmates lost six gigs in July to COVID. A drifting
situationist,
glistening, she jokes, after reviews, about changing her name to Ethereal
Riffs.
An indie-God walked through her vapecloud as she waited for coffee
after Ed Kuepper at the Quay. She records a split-screen duet with an
intangible ex.
Sends me Born Sandy Devotional.

(cont)

5.

My daughter dreamt I was singing. I was remembering/writing/
 dreaming about trees.
 In June, around Bloomsday, news of a friend's suicide reached me. As I
 slept, there
 was a resonant visceral weeping. Anomalous; remembering her
 kindness; antigravity,
 antimatter. In March she'd just driven away, climbed a grey matrix,
 anhedonic
 abnegation. What could be sadder? A fifty-four-year-old woman
 climbing a tree
 to drop through it tethered; find dryadic nihil; sweet ether, ozone's sea-
 blankness,
 Bach's devastating cello solo; found, retrieved by helicopter,
 holographic,
 holophrastic helix, her own seraphic sedan chair. I thought of
 Hemingway
 on why not to commit suicide, its postscript; his Bachian counterpoint
 on leaves.
 She does not fall like the rest of us, she falls by Poldy's, Joyce's
 law of falling bodies. We fall as du Pré's diminuendo, Cage's ASLSP,
 by minutiae, each transient graceful degree. To be. Infinitesimally falling
 and not falling.