

SERENISSIMA

When lonely I lie down in my hair
and say gondola, gondola. I lie down

in my hair and displace God,
who before I arrived, insolubly sad

and dragging a lagoon, was everywhere
singing the unsayable playing us

like flutes and finding all the stops,
the diary stop, the brain-kiss stop,

the cruel-milk-falling-from-the-eaves
stop. Once I broke a friend's diary

open, smashing the lock against a rock.
I too had my stops and was played,

played thoroughly until lying down
like twilight's grenade or an egg

twilight lays every five thousand
years, I measure the proportion of God

to self. There is precisely this much me
in the room. And I know precisely

because I am not that girl off to powder-

puff in the leaves thinking I love wearing

all my clothes at the same time winter
come smother me faster with your tongues

I am not the baby on its belly laughing
to itself (its first private joke, the joke itself

a stroke of blue) or two colors collapsing
in two, not a paperback soaking in rain,

o to be read by rain the rain turning
your pages with its fat greasy finger

or a gutter in which it comes rushing
an ax behind glass, blunt and sharp

no emergency, no emergency (it wishes
it could save the teakettle, a maiden

in a tower) o to be a tower or an otter,
a spindle, a drum, or thrush, the bird

and the disease, all of history would do,
or just a sandwich, a cross, a semi, an alp

but the old world I am not, the new world
neither. My heart flies out and never comes back.

Tanya Larkin 2003

HEAVEN AND HELL ARE REAL PLACES

Goody for them but I'll keep walking
trailing my dew my opalescent happiness
goo over the rooftops and chamomile fuzz
through the swan-choked pond a tiny
cathedral hidden in the ferns really swinging
with stained light a pink that keeps peeling
itself paler and virgin blue darkening into
more-experienced blue I had to shrink
my ego to enter by sucking on a candy
fiercely until it disappeared it was that easy
you simply have to stop thinking and use
your tongue somehow then you can fit
into the most coveted hiding place be it
tender or spiked or sashed with moans
like the itty-bitty altars in this toy cathedral
where I thank God for giving me autumn
and unwrapping it so violently shaking
the knife in the air nicking the light then
hacking it in two and mincing it to bits
and my happiness in this infinitely dying
light what would I do if I couldn't release
a little liquid now and then I would die
of happiness for sure I would burst

Tanya Larkin 2003