

The Planting

Look closely at the soundless
mobs of bees drifting among the marigolds.
Their pollen sacs are swollen,
heavy with the male seed that sighs
between a yellow bed
and the shadow of an ovum's room.

Notice my trowel too,
how I entrust its business end with the soil.
This is the easy part,
the earth coolly tender from last night's rain.
Its skin peeled back,
the ground yawns and stretches,

its feelers ticking faintly, tasting sun.
I crouch like a microscope, hovering
over the hole to watch the insects watching me.
I should have made a clank, intrusion
of clutch and gear, all the mental levers working limbs,
eye blink, and the harsh plowing of the jaw.

But I have no voice for this,
and framed in a blinding sun these telescoping arms
must orbit unfathomed (their intentions
masked by silver mirrors reflecting clouds)
while tense plates of muscles
shift and compel my tectonic grip

to rock with a slow, elemental motion.
Then, as I spoon phosphate and lime,
ants scurry about their shattered room,
specks in Brownian motion
scattered, nonplussed,
and protesting with the clay.

Imagine my obsession
as I mate earth with roots green-tipped
and tumid with life, their cogwheels
straining to lock teeth inside the ancient place
(near my feet)
which I have prepared.

Water rushing down the sluice
disappears as each cell greedily fills its cask.
The plant is full of sweet wine drained
from a table held atilt, a greenhouse drunk
that thinks he's the only game in town
as he unpacks his limbs.

A stranger to these parts,
he quickly branches into my brain
where cardinals pluck the fruit from pedicels,
where plumes of inflorescence
are ravished in shadows of the old woods
which recede,

and where trembles of dispute
tighten the metaphysical throat through which I breathe,
alternately stripping or quickening my confidence
in a world, grounded in weeds,
that watches a plant flex its muscles
but speaks in the inaudible voice I am trying to explain.

All alone in their hive,
Cyprian queens and domestic drones
make sterile love. And there is no cure
as flowers chaste and drawstring tight against the bee's
stingless probe are turning from the garden
that is spading over and over.