

Room in a Tempest

Mimmo Paladino, 1984

my lonesome pink egg you have to pay close attention
in the din of an angel's blaring trumpet wild
chicory rocksmoke and nightly sleep if you wait
on that clay floor long enough eventually
the stars will bore through you like the tunneling
whiteworms that tore the town's prize bull
from hoof to horn remember the bones'
song *we are glad to be scattered we did*
little good to each other again you're confusing
insides with outsides a brass heart
and the warm blood clotting around it
there is such a delicate membrane between kindness

and weakness a chip of ice in a folded palm
when the fishbirds arrived they tore apart
the flowers sprouting from your jug the bruised
petals lay like unpeeled faces in the buttery
firelight now your seizures begin
to run together now they are blissing
over their own textures

to keep hold through the violence the birds
slide their claws into your back the puncturing
almost tender though such erotic potential is lost
on a mind so blank as yours you are a rock
with a cave inside it's hard to even
see it through the fog your poor mouth
awaiting its next disaster steam is a ghost
who lives in water he owns only a minnow's
sneeze of time when you hear him whistling up
welcome him sweetly he will wrap like a cloth
over your soft gold eyes to hide them
from the birds their horrible beaks